

CASTS WEARER GUIDE

Tips for getting better fast



Dos and don'ts

Your arm or leg has been immobilized in a cast, which you're going to have to wear for as long as your doctor deems necessary. The exact time depends on your age and the condition of the bone.

In order to assess how well your bone is healing, you'll have to come back to the hospital regularly for x-rays.

Here are some important tips for making sure your arm or leg heals as quickly as possible.

- ▶ Move your fingers or toes as much as possible, to keep the blood circulating.
- ▶ Move whatever joints are not in the cast.
- ▶ Don't put anything between the cast and your skin if it itches. You might do yourself an injury that will only be noticed once it becomes infected.
- ▶ Don't expose your cast to the sun or heat (radiator, hair dryer, etc.).
- ▶ Don't wet the cast (not even fibreglass casts are waterproof).
- ▶ Don't ride a bicycle, motorbike or scooter, skate, ski or swim while you have the cast.
- ▶ Avoid activities that are very physical, violent (martial arts, boxing, etc.) or dirty (gardening, playing in the sand, etc.).
- ▶ Stick to activities that are compatible with a cast: reading, board games, video games your parents allow you to play, etc.

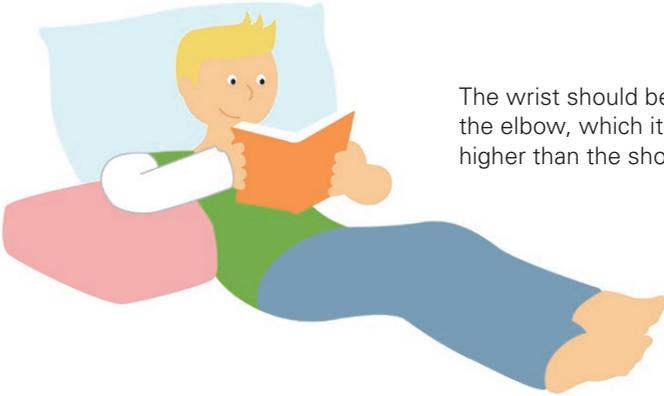


INFO

Plaster casts dry in 24 to 48 hours.
Fibreglass casts dry in 3 to 5 hours.

Arm or forearm

- ▶ Don't wear rings on your fingers.
- ▶ Always keep your arm raised. Support it with a sling or prop it on a cushion.



The wrist should be higher than the elbow, which itself should be higher than the shoulder.

Leg

- ▶ Don't lean on your cast, unless you have a shoecast.
- ▶ Contract the thigh muscle as often as possible – at least 10 times in a row and 10 times a day – to prevent muscle loss.
- ▶ After walking somewhere, don't leave your leg dangling or your toes may swell.
- ▶ Use a cushion or a chair to prop up your leg.
- ▶ Avoid standing for too long.



Should you have a problem

Call the Children's Hospital immediately if:

- ▶ Your cast breaks, hurts or irritates your skin, smells bad or has become too big (the limb moves inside)
- ▶ You can feel the cast pressing against a part of the limb, or a small object has become stuck in the cast
- ▶ You continue to experience strong pain even though you've raised the fractured limb (see drawing) and taken the prescribed painkillers
- ▶ You can't move your fingers or toes anymore, or they prickle, are swollen, cold or blue or white (they should be pink-coloured)
- ▶ You have a fever (+38.5 °C), feel shivery or sick to your stomach, have chest pain or are short of breath

Who should you contact if you have a problem or in an emergency?

- ▶ The plaster room, Monday to Friday, from 7.30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
☎ 022 372 46 54
- ▶ Pediatric Orthopaedic Unit, open 24/7
☎ 079 553 99 63

You can also go directly to pediatric emergencies, open 24/7, at 47 avenue de la Roseaie.

Practical advice

- ▶ Protect your cast with a plastic bag when you shower.
- ▶ Don't take baths while you're wearing the cast.
- ▶ Wash the fingers and toes of the limb in the cast every day.
- ▶ Don't wear nail polish.
- ▶ To dress, start with the cast.
- ▶ To undress, end with the cast.