

## INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO CARE AND LIVE WITH A CAST

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SN	Patient's Action	Rationale
1.	Notify the nurse or physician of decreased sensation, numbness, tingling, decreased motions, swelling, cyanosis. Also if there is a change in the location and type of pain experienced. The patient should always be aware and alert for signs and symptoms of complications and cast discomfort. The physician should be notified of any increase in systemic temperature greater than 100 C, drainage from the cast, foul odour. Change in the fit of the cast leads to loss of cast integrity.	These are indications of impaired neuromuscular status.
2.	Move the fingers, toes, and other joints remaining outside of the cast.	This minimizes oedema and maintains range of motions and muscle strength.
3.	Do not insert objects under the cast e.g. coat hangers, tongue blades, coins, toys etc.	These may cause pressure areas and tissue necrosis.
4.	Avoid vigorous activity.	
5.	Adhere to weight - bearing and activity restrictions outlined by the physician.	
6.	If itching persists, the patient / family should notify the physician.	
7.	Do not place talcum powder and creams around the edges of the cast.	They may build up, or soften the skin or form crust.
8.	Use a cast guard or plastic bag to keep the cast dry if showering is allowed by the physician.	Water causes mature cast to crumble and become soft.
9.	Perform weight bearing by the affected leg as instructed by the physician. The cast shoe should be worn for ambulating when weight is placed on the casted leg.	This prevents slipping due to the hard surface of the cast.
10.	Carry out muscle's exercises of the immobilized body part. (e. g. quadriceps ).	To maintain good muscle's tone and prevent muscle wasting.

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11.	Keep the plaster cast dry. Notify the physician if the cast becomes wet.	Moisture alters the integrity of the cast and may cause maceration of the skin.
12.	Do not bear weight on the cast until after it has completely dried (usually 72 hours)	This precaution maintains the integrity of the cast.
13.	Do not dirty or physically abuse the cast.	
14.	Synthetic cast only; damage or weakening of the cast will not occur with submersion in water. However, the patient should consider the following before getting the cast wet: a. The physician must allow it. a. There may be an open wound / incision under the cast that must be dried completely or the skin may macerate.	
15.	Rest the cast on a towel or pillow to avoid scratching.	
16.	Smoothen the rough edges of the cast with a nail file.	
17.	Place a piece of stockinet over the cast to protect clothing and prevent irritation of the skin of the unaffected extremity that comes into contact with the cast.	
18.	Do not remove any padding from the cast.	Padding aids in immobilization and reduces pressure on tissues.