



# Davis Spine & Orthopaedics

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## Cast Care Instructions

### Cast Care Overview:

You have been fitted with a cast or splint to protect your bone and reduce pain as you heal. It is important to take care of your cast or splint to minimize the risk of potential complications, such as skin infection. If you have questions or concerns about your cast, contact the office.

### Cast Care Instructions:

- Mild swelling of the injured area is common during the first few days. Swelling may make your cast feel tight initially. To reduce swelling, keep the cast above the level of your heart for 24 to 48 hours. This can be accomplished by resting it on pillows. Also, gently move your fingers or toes (where the cast is located) frequently.
- Ice helps keep the swelling down. Apply a bag of ice (or a bag of frozen vegetables) covered with a thin towel to the cast for 20 minutes every two hours while awake. Do not apply ice directly to the skin.
- If you were prescribed a medication to help decrease pain and swelling, use it as directed. If you were not prescribed something, you may be able to take a non-prescription pain medication, such as Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol and others).
- Do not get the cast or splint wet. To bathe with a cast, cover the cast with a plastic bag, tape the opening shut, and hang the cast outside the tub. Even when covered with plastic, you should not place the cast in water or allow water to run over the area. Waterproof cast covers are available at medical supply stores, but are not completely waterproof.
- If the cast becomes wet, you can dry it with a hair dryer on the cool setting. Do not use the warm or hot setting because this can burn the skin. You can use a vacuum cleaner with a hose attachment to pull air through the cast and speed drying.
- Keep the cast clean and avoid getting dirt or sand inside the cast. Do not apply powder or lotion on or near the cast. Cover the cast when eating.
- Do not place anything inside the cast, even for itchy areas. Sticking items inside the cast can injure the skin and lead to infection. Using a hair dryer on the cool setting may help soothe itching.
- Do not pull the padding out from inside your cast.

### When to seek help:

- If there are sore areas or a foul odor from the cast, cracks or breaks in the cast, or the cast feels too tight.
- You develop swelling that causes pain or makes it so you cannot move your fingers or toes.
- You develop tingling or numbness in the arm or fingers or toes.
- Your fingers or toes are blue or cold.
- You develop severe pain in or near the casted arm or leg.
- The cast becomes soaking wet and does not dry with a hair dryer or vacuum.

**Please Note:** While your insurance may have paid for the application of the initial cast, they **WILL NOT** pay for cast materials or application of a replacement cast in the event that the cast must be removed and reapplied for a preventable reason caused by the patient. For example, being pushed into the swimming pool. These charges will be the responsibility of the patient.