

Casts and Splints

You have been given a temporary cast or splint in the emergency department. You should:

- Keep the affected limb elevated above the heart as much as possible for the next 48 hours. This will help reduce swelling, help with the pain and also make sure your cast or splint will not get too tight. You should wiggle your fingers/toes several times a day to prevent swelling.
- Do not get your cast or splint wet as this will ruin the plaster or if it is fiberglass it will cause the padding to get wet and possibly rot. This means you will have to cover the cast with a plastic bag, taped shut when showering and avoid getting the cast or splint directly wet. If having a bath the area should be left hanging out.
- Keep the cast or splint area clean and dry to prevent infection. Activities that increase sweating or expose the area to dirt or debris should be avoided.
- Never place anything inside the cast or splint for any reason (e.g. to scratch an itch). Instead you can:
 - Tap on the cast or splint lightly to create a vibration which will ease the itch
 - Blow cool air under the cast



What can I take for pain?

For pain relief you may use ibuprofen (Advil®). If you can't take ibuprofen, or if you need additional pain relief, you may use acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Your doctor may also prescribe additional pain control if required.

Fracture Clinic Appointment

You will need to return to be assessed by a specialist doctor and for next steps to be decided. Please read the handout provided, noting the date/time and further instructions

These instructions are not intended to be all-inclusive, and may not cover all possibilities. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your doctor, Telehealth Ontario (866)797-0000, or return to the emergency department.

RVH-2492 06-July-2021



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Page 1 of 2

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How to use Crutches

The nurse who give you your crutches should show you how to use them properly. Here are some additional pointers and reminders:

- Crutches should rest at the side of your body, not in your armpits
- Your weight should be held on your hands
- You should not place any weight on the cast or splint
- Be careful outside, especially with wet, icy, snowy or uneven ground.
- You should always lead with the crutches and follow through with the good limb, flat on the ground. Crutches should be positioned not too close or far from the body as it shifts your balance. Take small strides forward to also help with balance.
- Careful when using crutches on the stairs. Instead hold the crutches in one hand and the handrail in the other. Step down with the bad leg and crutches first, then the good leg. When going up the stairs, step up with the good leg and then the bad leg and crutches. “Up with the good—down with the bad.”

Call your family doctor or return to emergency department if:

- If the pain is worsening at any time, despite taking your pain medication
- Numbness or loss of feeling in the affected limb
- Strong odour or open sores visible under the cast
- Severe swelling of the cast or splinted limb or if the cast feels too tight
- Noticeable changes in temperature or colour to the ends of the casted or splinted limb (e.g. fingers/toes)
- Your cast or splint breaks or an object gets stuck in it



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