

Caring for your cast

Your cast is protecting an injured limb and preventing it from moving. It will be completely dry in 48 hours. If you have a walking cast, do not walk on it before 48 hours.

Keep your cast dry; otherwise it will decompose and be less effective.

- To protect your cast in the shower or in the rain, wrap it in two plastic bags and close them well to make sure no water leaks in.
- Remove the bags as soon as possible, otherwise sweat from the skin will humidify the cast.

To prevent your fingers or toes from swelling, elevate your injured limb.

- For your leg or foot:
 - when you are sitting, elevate your leg on a small bench or pillow;
- For your arm or hand:
 - keep your arm in a sling with your fingers higher than your elbow.

Move your fingers and toes for a few minutes, every 30 minutes. This will activate your blood circulation and work your muscles and tendons.

It is normal for the skin under the cast to itch a little. Never insert an object under the cast to relieve the itch, as any scratches under the cast can easily become infected. To relieve the itching safely, use a hair dryer on the "cold air" setting.

Be careful not to break your cast. If your cast comes undone, cracks or is too big, call the Orthopaedics Clinic at Hôpital Montfort, at 613-746-4621, ext. 4304, between 7:30 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday to Friday. After these hours, go to the closest emergency.

Go to the closest emergency if:

- your cast seems to be tighter than usual, even after moving your fingers or toes for a few minutes and keeping the limb elevated;
- your fingers or toes are numb, swollen or change colour (white or blue);
- the discomfort becomes painful;
- there is discharge through the cast;
- a bad odour is coming from the cast;
- you feel pain in your chest or back or have difficulty breathing.

Pressure and elastic bandages

- Apply the bandage around the injured limb. Wrap it in a figure eight, from bottom to top.
- Keep the injured limb elevated as often as possible to avoid swelling.
- Remove the bandage 2 to 3 times a day to move and allow better blood circulation.
- Remove the bandage before going to sleep at night and put it on when you get up in the morning.
- Use the bandage as long as you feel you need it.

Remove the bandage and reapply it less tightly if:

- you feel pins and needles or numbness;
- you notice that your extremities are cold and/or swollen.

If the symptoms persist with a less tight wound bandage, contact your family physician.

Also contact your family physician if the swelling does not come down after:

- elevating the limb;
- applying ice;
- using a pressure or elastic bandage.

X-Ray

X-rays taken during your visit at the Emergency are first reviewed by the Emergency doctor. You will be told what they indicate. The next day, a radiologist will take another look at the X-rays to make sure no mistakes were made. You will be contacted if any new information is found.



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