

Dos and don'ts with Plaster Cast

- **DO** exercise your fingers, toes and limbs as instructed by the doctor.
- **DO** elevate the plastered limb as much as possible above heart level.
- **DO** use walking aids as instructed
- **DO** check the condition of the rubber ferrules on your walking aids regularly and for foreign objects which may cause you to slip.
- **DO** Always remove slings at night.
- **DON'T** poke anything down the cast to scratch.
- **DON'T** get the cast wet.
- **DON'T** cut or interfere with your cast.
- **DON'T** heat or cold the cast
- **DON'T** put weight on a leg plaster unless instructed by doctor
- **DON'T** use toxic substances to decorate your cast.
- **DON'T** wear jewellery such as rings on the injured limb in case swelling occurs.
- **DON'T** drive any vehicle whilst in plaster without medical advice

Alarming Sign- to contact the doctor/his team immediately

- **severe pain** in the limb which is not relieved by elevation and simple pain relief medication;
- uncomfortable / sudden increase in **swelling** of the fingers or toes;
- **change in colour** of fingers or toes in the cast i.e. blue or white (although bruising can be expected);
- **Restriction** of finger/toes movement
- constant pins and needles or **numbness** in the limb;
- an unusual smell or staining of the cast occurs;
- The cast **cracks or softens** or becomes wet, loose or uncomfortable.

Exercises whilst in a cast

- Exercise all joints not included in the cast of the affected limb.
- **When in an arm plaster**--•
 - Curl your fingers round to form a fist and then straighten them out again.
 - Touch each fingertip with your thumb and then release again in turn (depending on injury).
 - Bend and straighten your elbow (if it is not in plaster).
 - Move your shoulder regularly.
 - Try to do 10 of each exercise at least five times a day. Remove your sling whilst doing the exercises.
- **When in a leg plaster**
 - Move your toes up and down as much as possible.
 - Whilst lying down, tighten your thigh muscle, lift your leg straight up six inches and then relax.
 - Tense your leg inside the cast, hold for five seconds and then relax.
 - If your foot is free, pull your foot up towards you and push it down, then circle it around.

- DON'T walk on the plaster. It is better to use crutches.
- Try to do 10 of each exercise at least five times a day.

After cast removal

- **Pain, stiffness and swelling** frequently follow the removal of a cast. They can be reduced over a period of time by exercising the limb gently and regularly. Regular ice packs wrapped in a wet towel and elevation of the arm or leg will also help reduce swelling. After removal of a leg cast, weight bearing is sometimes not achieved immediately till the doctor permit's.
- **.Skin care**
If your skin has become dry and scaly under the cast, wash gently with soap and water and then apply a moisturiser. Repeat this twice a day. Please refrain from shaving/ rubbing with soap your limb for at least 48 hours after the cast has been removed.
