

Fiberglass cast



What is fiberglass?

Fiberglass is a type of plastic that can be easily shaped. It is light, durable and strong which allows effective immobilisation of the fracture site to allow for healing.

What is the purpose of my cast?

Our bodies start the healing process right from the moment of an injury. Your cast will facilitate this process by protecting and supporting the fractured site and the surrounding structures. Your cast has been fitted with a cushioned lining to prevent pressure on any vulnerable areas and to make it more comfortable.

How long does the cast take to fully harden?

Your cast will start to harden as soon as it is applied and is quite strong after 30 minutes. However, the fiberglass can take 24-48 hours to completely set. During this time it is important to not apply too much pressure on the cast. This will prevent any denting which can cause pressure on a vulnerable area.

How long will I have to wear my cast for?

A cast is usually worn for 4-6 weeks. Your Physiotherapist will advise you of the duration in line with advice from your GP and/ or specialist.

Can I get my cast wet?

Fiberglass is a waterproof material. We also use a waterproof lining (the cushioning under the fiberglass) which allows you to get your cast wet. You should wait until your cast is fully set before you do this (after the 24-48 hour window following application). To dry under your cast, you can elevate your casted limb to allow the water to exit the area. You can also use a hairdryer on a warm setting.

If you have sensitive skin, it may be better for you to avoid getting your cast wet to prevent skin irritation. You can do this by covering the cast in a plastic bag or glad wrap when showering.

What do I do if I feel itchy under the cast?

Try not to stick any objects down your cast to stop the itching (we know it's tempting). Instead, tap over the area where you feel itchy caused by bacteria at the skin surface - flush with antibacterial softwash when in the shower.

Am I allowed to move the rest of my arm/ leg that has the cast on?

Yes! Your Physiotherapist will show you ways that you can keep surrounding joints moving to prevent these areas becoming stiff and also to help drain any swelling.

When should I seek prompt medical attention?

Call us or seek medical attention if you experience an increase in pain, there is an increase in swelling or change of colour in surrounding areas (e.g. fingers or toes), if you start to feel pins and needles or numbness, or if you feel the area becoming increasingly hot or cold. Sometimes injuries keep swelling under the cast for a few days leading to pressure and pain.

How will my cast be removed?

Your cast will be removed using a cast saw. This is a quick, safe and painless experience. The saw moves in an oscillatory way (back and forth) meaning that it does not cut the skin. The lining under the cast will also help to provide protection.

What should I expect when my cast is removed?

When your cast is removed, you may feel that the area is stiff, tight and weak. This is completely normal given that the area has been immobilised for a number of weeks. Your Physiotherapist will take you through various treatment techniques and provide you with a tailored home exercise program to help get you back to your best!

Your skin may be red, irritated or dry. This is normal due to the cast preventing you from washing or moisturising this area. Use some gentle body wash and moisturiser over the next few days to help treat this.

You may need to receive a follow up X-ray or other form of imaging to ensure the fracture has healed. Your Physiotherapist, GP or specialist will advise you of this.

Should you require any additional information or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us- there is no such thing as a silly question!

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