

Caring for my cast



A health professional has put a cast on your injured leg or arm. This sheet will help you take care of the cast.

Why do I need a cast?

A cast keeps your injured limb completely still to help it heal.



How long do I need to wear my cast?

How long you need to wear your cast depends on how serious your injury is.

How long will it take for the cast to dry?

The plaster of Paris (white and most often used) dries in 24 to 48 hours. The fiberglass cast dries in 1 hour.

Do not put pressure on the cast until it is dry.

What rules do I need to follow once the cast is completely dry?

- > Never get the cast wet.
- > Do not wear jewellery on the casted hand or foot.
- > Do not use the casted limb for intense activities.
- > If you have a cast on your:
 - leg: never rest your heel on a hard surface because it could injure your skin and cause a pressure ulcer
 - forearm: using a sling is not recommended

How do I care for my injured limb?

- > Move your fingers or toes often to keep the blood flowing.
- > Work your muscles.
 - Leg cast: Squeeze your thigh muscles often.
 - Arm cast: Make a fist often.



What can I do if I feel discomfort?

- > To prevent or reduce swelling, elevate the casted limb as often as possible. At night, rest your limb on a pillow.



- > If you get itchy and feel you need to scratch, use a hair dryer to blow cold air into the cast. Do not use a ruler or a pin to scratch yourself.

Every day, check the skin where the cast stops:

- Compare the color of the skin on the casted limb with your other limb.
- Check for signs of complications.

Could there be complications?

Yes. Here are the signs you should look for.

- > Intense, continuous pain on the casted limb
- > Changes in the fingers or toes of the casted limb:
 - Numbness
 - No feeling
 - Cold skin
 - Abnormal color
 - Increased swelling
- > Unpleasant odour coming from the cast
- > Constant cramps or a burning sensation in the injured limb
- > Fever
- > Very uncomfortable pressure on the skin
- > Cast that becomes soft or breaks
- > Difficulty breathing or chest pain

What do I do if there is a complication?

BEFORE HEADING TO THE HOSPITAL

Call the Orthopedic Clinic, Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.:

> **514 890-8406**

A nurse will assess your symptoms.

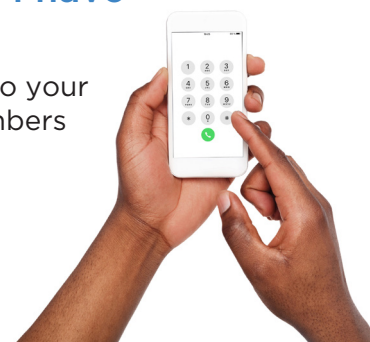
For any question related to your health, you can call a nurse at the Health Patient CHUM Hotline (ligne Santé Patient).

> **514 890-8086**

This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. When calling, be sure to have your health insurance card on hand.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

For any question related to your health, call one of the numbers above for help.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our website

chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca