

Cast care

This leaflet is for patients using the Plaster Room services at the Royal Berkshire Hospital and tells you how to look after your cast and crutches / walking aids.

Looking after the cast

- Your cast will either be made of plaster of Paris, lightweight plastic / soft resin or a combination of the two. A plaster of Paris cast takes up to 48 hours to dry totally and a lightweight plastic / resin cast takes 1 hour to dry.
- It is important to keep your cast dry. Keep the affected limb out of water and cover when bathing / showering.
- **Do not put any objects down the cast** to scratch at the skin. If you experience itching that worsens or does not improve, please contact the Plaster Room as soon as possible.
- The cast usually lasts the whole of your treatment, but may be replaced if medically necessary. Please report any areas where the cast is weak, damaged or bending.

Risks and when to seek help:

Skin damage under the cast:

- Sometimes, your cast can rub your skin and can cause a blister forming under the cast. Check the skin around the edges of the cast for areas of redness / soreness regularly. This needs to be treated as soon as possible to stop it from getting worse.
- If you feel any rubbing, burning, an increase in pain or notice unusual odour, numbness, pins and needles or any other concerns, **contact the Plaster Room as soon as possible**.

Damage to your cast:

- If your plaster cracks, becomes loose or if you have dropped something inside your cast, please contact the Plaster Room.

Reduced circulation:

- If your fingers or toes become cold and blue, even if you have kept your limb raised, please contact the Plaster Room for advice straight away.

Swelling and pain

- Keep your arm or leg raised on a soft surface, such as a pillow, as often as possible while your limb is in a cast. This will help any swelling to go down and will reduce the feeling of pins and needles in your limb. When resting the limb, remember to regularly reposition to encourage blood flow.

Other information

- Keeping your limb raised will also help relieve any pain you may be feeling. We recommend that you take regular pain relief for the first few weeks of your injury if needed. Please be aware that the cast will not relieve all of your pain.

- If you are using a sling, remember to move your elbow and shoulder as advised. It is important to keep all your unaffected limbs mobile. Exercising all free joints regularly will help prevent stiffness.
- There may be a slight opening / gap in the cast; your clinician will advise you if this is necessary. This may be to allow for swelling. It also allows the cast to be removed and replaced for other treatments / investigations to take place.

DO NOT GET YOUR CAST WET OR APPLY HEAT:	DO NOT CUT YOUR CAST:
 	

If you have crutches, walking sticks or frames

- Please make sure that someone has shown you or told how to use your crutches, stick or frame.
- Please do not share crutches or walking aids with family or friends. They are prescribed on an individual basis.
- Please return any crutches, frames or walking sticks in clean, acceptable condition to the department that issued them. Please do not return any other appliances / equipment to the Plaster Room, unless asked to do so.

RBH Plaster Room tel: 0118 322 7040 (Monday-Friday 8.15am-5.00pm)

RBH Orthopaedic Outpatient Department tel: 0118 322 8334

Other information

If you are concerned or have any other questions, do ask the staff in the Fracture Clinic or Plaster Room, open Monday to Friday 8.15am to 5pm.

Plaster Room: 0118 322 7040

Fracture Clinic: 0118 322 7553

Emergency Department (A&E): 0118 322 7022

At other times, please contact your GP or NHS 111.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Plaster Room, Orthopaedic Outpatients, November 2021

Next review due: November 2023