



Patient cast care checklist

This checklist is for staff or relatives looking after patients in a cast usually to immobilise a fracture (break) while it heals. It will help you to check that the cast fits well and remains comfortable, as well as reducing the risk of skin damage. You should make these checks at least once per day.

Before you start

To check both ends of the cast, you should carefully slip a finger under the cast edge and lift it away from the skin, to view the skin beneath.

What you need to check:

- Is the cast comfortable?
- Is the cast in a good state of repair? Are there any cracks and weak spots?
- Is the cast soiled with bodily fluids, such as blood or faeces (poo)?
- Are the cast edges well-padded?
- Are there any areas of rubbing to the skin caused by the cast? Check vulnerable areas, such as between the thumb and forefinger, at the elbow and behind the knee.
- Can the patient move the joints at the end of the cast? For example, if they have a 'below elbow' cast, they should be able to move their fingers and elbow.
- Does the patient say the cast feels too tight?
- Is there any swelling, on or around the affected limb?
- Does the limb have altered sensation, such as numbness or pins and needles?
- Does the patient have any pain or any specific areas of soreness? Pay particular attention to bony areas within the cast, for example, at the wrist, the elbow and the ankle.
- Are there any areas of staining on the cast, which might suggest there is a sore or wound under it? If there is, outline the stain with a pen and monitor it to see if it increases.
- Is there a strong odour from under the cast?
- Are there any signs of an allergic reaction, for example, a rash or **excessive** itching?
- Is the affected limb being positioned correctly according to plaster room guidance?

If you are unsure or have concerns about any of the above, contact the Plaster Room and/or refer to any advice given on discharge from the hospital.

What should I do if I have any concerns after checking the cast?

Contact the Plaster Room as soon as possible as the cast may require assessment or modification. Please call for initial advice – the Plaster Room staff will advise if you then need to return to the hospital for further action.

Contacting the Plaster Room

The Plaster Room is open between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday only.

Telephone: 0118 322 7040

Outside of these time, please contact the patient's GP, NHS 111 or the Emergency Department (A&E) – **0118 322 7022**

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

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

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Next review due: September 2028