

## Your cast and crutches

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

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### Looking after your cast and yourself

- 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/or cover with a plastic bag when bathing/showering.
- It is important to keep all your unaffected limbs mobile, regularly exercising all free joints.
- Do not put any objects down the cast to scratch at the skin.
- If you experience severe discomfort such as numbness, pins and needles, pain or burning sensation, contact the Plaster Room, the Emergency Department (A&E) or the Minor Injuries Unit at West Berkshire Community Hospital.

### If you have a lightweight plastic/soft resin cast

- Your cast is made up of a bandage coated in a soft plastic resin material. This makes it light but strong. It can also be flexible so can be better suited to some parts of the body than traditional plaster casts.
- The cast usually lasts the whole of your treatment, but may be replaced if necessary.
- There may be a slight opening/gap in the cast – this is to allow your muscles to move and for any swelling to go down. It also allows for other treatment to take place without the discomfort of too many cast changes.
- You may have a coloured cohesive (one that sticks to itself) bandage or a crepe bandage wrapped around the cast. Unless instructed otherwise, you may remove this bandage and replace with a new one that can be purchased from most pharmacies. The cast must remain in place while doing this.
- Regularly check the skin around the edges of the cast for areas of redness/soreness. If you notice any, please contact the Plaster Room.

- Your cast may get loose as your treatment continues. To give more support and to aid comfort you can remove and replace the current cohesive bandage slightly tighter.
- Please follow the advice you have been given by your doctor and/ or nursing staff. If there is anything you do not understand, please ask.

**If you experience any pain that does not settle or if you have any concerns regarding your cast, please contact the Plaster Room, or if urgent, your nearest Emergency department or the Minor Injuries Unit at West Berkshire Community Hospital.**

**If you have crutches, walking sticks or frames**

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

For more information about the Trust, visit our website [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

Further advice

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

**RBH Orthopaedic Outpatient Department tel: 0118 322 8334**

**Emergency Department (A&E RBH) tel: 0118 322 7022**

**Outpatients (WBCH) tel: 01635 277358**

**Minor Injuries Unit (WBCH) tel: 01635 273508**

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