

Serial casting

What is serial casting?

Serial casting is a treatment for tiptoe walking that uses plaster casts to stretch the soft tissue (e.g. muscles in the calf) for an extended period of time. This treatment will be carried out in the plaster room and is done by applying a series of casts, usually fortnightly, while attempting to gradually improve your child's range of ankle movement. Your child may need serial casting for between 2-6 weeks. The number of weeks/casts necessary depends on the level of stretch required.

If you have not been contacted by the Plaster Room Team within two working days of your child's procedure please call Plaster Room on 0118 322 7040 to arrange the first appointment.

What to bring and what happens on the day

When attending for this appointment, please bring with you any toys, books or electronic devices for your child to use as a distraction during the appointment. Your child should wear or bring loose fitting trousers or shorts to allow for application of the casts. Prior to the appointment, please encourage your child to bath/wash the skin as this may not be possible for two weeks after the cast is applied. Please do not bring other children to the appointments.

On the day of the appointment, you will be shown to a bay where a member of staff will explain the procedure and ask if you have any questions. Protective soft socks and pads will be applied to the child's leg(s) and then, while attempting the stretch, the soft cast will be applied from just below the knee to before the toes. Your child should be able to choose a coloured bandage for the cast and may be given special shoes to wear.

How to look after the casts

- The cast must stay dry at all times. You can invest in a plastic cover or use a plastic bag to protect it from splashes. You may find an assisted wash more appropriate while your child is in the cast. Please speak to the plaster room staff if you have any queries.
- Your child will be able to walk, play and go to school with the cast on; however, it may be advisable that they do not take part in PE sessions or contact sports. This is because activities can increase the chances of developing soreness under the cast.
- If the skin underneath the cast becomes itchy do not put anything down the cast to scratch the area. This can break the skin or the object can get stuck. You can use a

hairdryer on a cool setting 30cm away from the cast to alleviate this feeling. As the cast is slightly flexible, you can also gently press on the cast over the itchy area for relief.

- If the coloured cohesive bandage become loose, messy or start to tear, you can purchase similar bandages from your local pharmacy. Contact the plaster room if you need help locating the correct bandage. Once you have this bandage you can apply it over the top of the current one.

What are the risks of serial casting?

Although every attempt is made to reduce the risk of complications within the cast, your child may experience rubbing/soreness, most commonly around bony prominences such as the ankle or heel. If left untreated, this can develop into pressure sores or blisters. As the cast is holding the foot in an unfamiliar position, the foot may attempt to return to the 'tiptoe walking' position within the cast which can cause this rubbing. If your child experiences any of the symptoms listed in 'What to look out for', please follow the steps for removing the cast.

As the foot is being casted in an unfamiliar position, your child can struggle with balancing and mobilising in the first few days after casting. This usually improves with time and practice; however, if you see no improvement, please contact the plaster room. If they need it, your child will also be provided with walking aids.

What to look out for

While the cast is on, your child should not be in any pain but may experience mild discomfort or a stretching sensation. Please regularly check your child for any of the symptoms below:

- Pain, numbness, tingling or pins and needles in the limb.
- Rubbing, burning pain at any bony prominences (eg heel, toes, bridge of foot).
- Redness or any other signs of rubbing around the edges of the cast.
- Swollen, cold or pins and needles in the toes.

If any of the above concerns arise, please contact the plaster room immediately. If these symptoms occur outside of plaster room opening hours immediately remove the casts and contact the plaster room as soon as possible.

How to remove the casts

If any of the above symptoms occur outside of plaster room opening hours (8.15am-5.00pm Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays), the cast can be safely removed by following the steps below:

1. Unravel or carefully cut through the coloured bandage.
2. There will be a visible split down the middle of the cast, open and carefully remove the cast.

3. Remove the soft white/beige stocking.

If you need to remove the cast out of hours, please contact the plaster room as soon as it opens the next working day. If you have difficulty removing the casts out of hours and it is an emergency, please attend your local emergency/ minor injuries department.

Useful numbers

Plaster Room: 0118 322 7040

Emergency Department:

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust: 0118 322 5111

Friends & Family Test: While you are in hospital please spare a few moments to answer one question 'Would you recommend our service to family and friends if they required similar care or treatment?' by filling in the card given or online by visiting www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/surveys.

For more information about the Trust visit our website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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