

## Care of a Child with their arm/leg in a plaster of Paris cast - advice for Parents/Carers/Guardians

This leaflet provides information to help you care for your child or the child under your care when they have a plaster cast. Your child may have a 'backslab' which is a half-plaster to allow for swelling.

### Exercises

Your child should carry out the following exercises whilst in plaster as they help the healing process:

#### Hand or arm:

- Clench and unclench the hand.
- Wiggle the fingers.
- Exercise the joint above the plaster.

#### Foot or leg:

- Wiggle the toes
- Exercise the joint above the plaster

### Elevation

Elevate the plastered limb whenever possible. For the first few days, while it is still swelling, place their arm in a sling when up and about or on a pillow when sitting or at rest. Rest a plastered leg up on a stool or low chair.

### Pain

While in the plaster there should not be much pain but if there is discomfort give children's paracetamol such as Calpol® and/or ibuprofen according to the manufacturer's instructions.

### Limb/wound problems

Please contact the Fracture Clinic or the Emergency Department if any of the following problems occur:

- there is increased limb pain.
- the toes or fingers become blue or swollen.
- your child is unable to move the limb.

This may indicate that the plaster is too tight and could cause serious circulation problems.

### Plaster problems

Please also contact the Fracture Clinic or the Emergency Department if:

- The cast is rubbing.
- The cast becomes cracked.
- It accidentally becomes wet inside.
- There is a burning or rubbing sensation or a blister like pain.
- The cast becomes soggy.
- There is a discharge, wetness or unpleasant smell under the cast.
- Any object is dropped down inside the cast!

## Do Not

- Get the plaster wet.
- Write on the plaster until dry (48 hours).
- Cut, knock or bump the plaster.
- Put objects inside the plaster cast.

## Further and emergency contact information

Monday – Friday 9am-4pm, please contact the Casting department directly:

- **Conquest Hospital casting department** – Tel: (01424) 755255 extension 7566
- **Eastbourne DGH casting department** – Tel: (01323) 417400 extension 4038

Out of hours, contact the Emergency Department (A&E):

- **Conquest Hospital** – Tel: (01424) 755255
- **Eastbourne DGH** – Tel: (01323) 417400

If unable to contact any of the above phone NHS 111.

## Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

## Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: (01323) 417400 Ext: 5860 or by email at: [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net)

## Hand hygiene

The Trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

## Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 01424 755255 Ext: 2620

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

## Reference

Reference: A Framework for Casting Standards. RCN Society of Orthopaedic Nursing 2000. The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information: Mrs Scarlett McNally, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon. Elizabeth Vaughan, Ward Matron, Friston.

Next review date: November 2019

Responsible clinician: Caroline Stephenson, Practice Educator, Paediatrics.