

Instructions Following Application of a Cast, Splint or Surgical Boot

This leaflet is designed to inform you about the care of a cast and possible complications of having a cast, splint or surgical boot.

Possible complications of the cast/splint/surgical boot

If any of the following occur please return to A&E, Fracture Clinic or Plaster Room (see hours of opening and contact telephone numbers below):

- Your fingers/toes become blue, white or swollen, or you are unable to move your arm/leg or fingers/toes
- Your arm/leg becomes more painful
- You develop constant pins and needles or numbness in the arm/leg or fingers/toes
- You have blister-like pain or rubbing under your cast/splint/boot
- You have a discharge, wetness or smell under your cast/splint/boot
- You drop any object down inside your cast
- The plaster becomes wet from any fluid
- You have swelling of your arm/leg above top of the cast/splint/boot
- The cast/splint/boot becomes cracked, soft or loose

For patients with Leg casts/splints/boots

A possible **serious** complication is a deep vein thrombosis (**DVT**) or pulmonary embolism (**PE**). These are blood clots in the leg (DVT) or lung (PE).

Symptoms include:

- Increased or renewed pain or swelling in the leg
- Pain in the calf or thigh, rather than over the fracture / injury site
- Shortness of breath
- A sharp pain in the chest which is worse when you breathe in
- Coughing up blood

If you experience any of the above, you must seek urgent medical help. Either return to A&E or dial 999.

Care of yourself and the cast/splint/boot

You should:

1

- Exercise the joints not held in your cast/splint/boot as much as possible e.g. fingers and toes
- Elevate your limb, especially during the first few days
- If you have a cast, allow it to dry naturally - if made from Plaster of Paris, leave it uncovered for the first 48 hours
- Inform the Plaster Technician if you plan to fly anywhere whilst in a cast

You should not:

- Let your limb hang down unless it is being used
- Sit too close to the fire
- Get a cast wet
- Put talc or anything else down your cast to make it smell nice
- Cut, heat or otherwise interfere with your cast/splint/boot
- Do not knock or hit a cast
- Do not use spray paint on a cast, it may burn the skin
- Do not go on the beach, play in sand or go into water

Contact numbers:

1

- **A&E: 01603 287325**

- **Plaster Room: 01603 287874**

- **Fracture Clinic: 01603 289483**

Plaster Room and Fracture Clinic Opening Hours are:

Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5.30pm

Friday: 8.30am to 1.30pm

Plaster Room is also open on Saturday:-

Saturday: 9am to 1pm

Useful sources of information:

Please ask your doctor or nurse for more information.

NHS choices website patient information on blood clots. Visit www.nhs.uk

Lifblood: The Thrombosis Charity also has more information. Please visit <http://www.thrombosisuk.org/home.php>

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) – To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS on 01603-289036

