NB Trauma Program
Programme de traumatologie du NB

Horizon Health Network | Vitalité Health Network | Ambulance NB | New Brunswick Department of Health
Réseau de santé Horizon | Réseau de santé Vitalité | | Ministère de la santé du Nouveau-Brunswick

Casts

Casts are used to help keep your injured area from moving. This will help it get better faster and decrease the chance that you will get hurt again. The amount of time that you will need your cast on will depend on how badly you hurt yourself.

The first 48 hours at home:

- Keep your cast up above your heart by putting it up on pillows (you might need to lie down).
- Wiggle you fingers or toes often to help your blood flow better (every 10 seconds).
- If the doctor says that it is okay, you can put an ice pack on the injured area for 15 minutes every hour. Make sure you keep your cast from getting wet.
- If you have a plaster cast, it takes 72 hours to dry. Keep it uncovered even at night until it is dry. Try not to rest your cast on hard or sharp things, because it can cause a dent. Dents can cause sores.
- Try not to wear tight clothing (close to your hurt part) when you have a cast on because it could slow down your blood flow to the hurt part.
- Never put anything inside your cast! This could hurt the skin underneath and cause infection.

Can I take a bath or go swimming with my cast?

- Most casts should not get wet but with some specially treated fiberglass casts you can swim and take a bath.
- Irritation and infection can occur, if your cast gets wet when it shouldn't. You should ask the health-care professional who puts your cast on about the type of cast you have.

Return to the emergency department if:

- Your fingers or toes are white, cold to touch, you have more pain, or you can not feel them very well (numb). Sometimes because of swelling, the blood going through your veins cannot get through and your cast will need to be split (opened up) to help the pressure.
- Your cast is soft, has a crack (small break) or a bad smell coming out of it.
- You have swelling that lasts a long time.
- There is a dark mark on your cast (staining), which could be a sign of bleeding under your cast.
- You have a fever that is not related to another problem that you have.

Return to orthopedic clinic at _____ on _____.

March 2012