

Plaster care advice

Orthopaedic casting outpatients department [Patient information](#)

Why am I in a plaster?

You have been put into a plaster cast to support an injury to a limb - be it a fracture, other injury or surgery.

General advice

- The limb should be elevated when the cast is first applied - this is to avoid or diminish any swelling there could be either acutely or post op.
- Temporary plasters take a whole 48 hours to dry fully so be careful of denting the plaster and keep it rested on a soft or flat surface.
- Full plasters (or soft cast) take around an hour to fully set.
- You can write on the plaster after the drying time!
- Until the cast has set, do not lean it on any hard or sharp object to avoid dents and possible complications regarding pressure areas.
- Keep your fingers, toes and other joints not in plaster moving (unless told otherwise!) - It helps prevents stiffness and swelling.
- **DO NOT** get the cast wet. A few drops of rain is fine, but washing, bathing, showering etc is a no!
- **DO NOT** poke anything down the plaster! Itching can get annoying but sticking things down the plaster can result in an infection. Try to think about something else or use a hairdryer's cold function to ward off the itch!

My cast feels very loose, what do I do?

If the temporary or full cast has been on for a while (temporary or full one) it is normal to get loose. This can be due to muscle atrophy (muscle loss from not using the limb) and the reduction of swelling. For temporary plaster, initially getting a bandage and tightening the cast should work until we see you back in clinic. If it doesn't or for full plasters, give us a call on the number overleaf and we will do our best to help you!

My cast feels tight

Plasters normally feel tight after the initial injury - if this is the case keep the limb elevated (higher than your heart if possible) to allow for any swelling to subside.

If it is a full plaster it is usually a sign you are doing too much. If this is the case, elevate the limb and keep the fingers or toes moving. If this does not work or gets worse (especially if there is severe tingling or numbness) call us!

Other concerns

If you have any problems such as:

- rubbing
- tightness
- looseness
- tingling
- numbness
- wetness,
- severe pain,
- extreme swelling,
- discharge from any wound site
- staining on the plaster which has an unknown origin (usually but not always accompanied with pain or rubbing)

Give us a call on the number below or go to your nearest Emergency Department.

Contact details (Poole)

Plaster room

Telephone: **0300 019 2140**

Emergency Department

Telephone: **01202 442202**




Please note: Our telephone lines are open from 9am to 5pm however a 24 hour answerphone service is available and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

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or email **patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk**.

Poole Hospital, Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB

Author: **Gary Smith** Date: **March 2025** Version: **Five** Review date: **March 2028** Ref: **588/21**

t: 01202 665511 w: www.uhd.nhs.uk : @uhdnhs.bsky.social : @UHDTrust : @uhd_nhs