

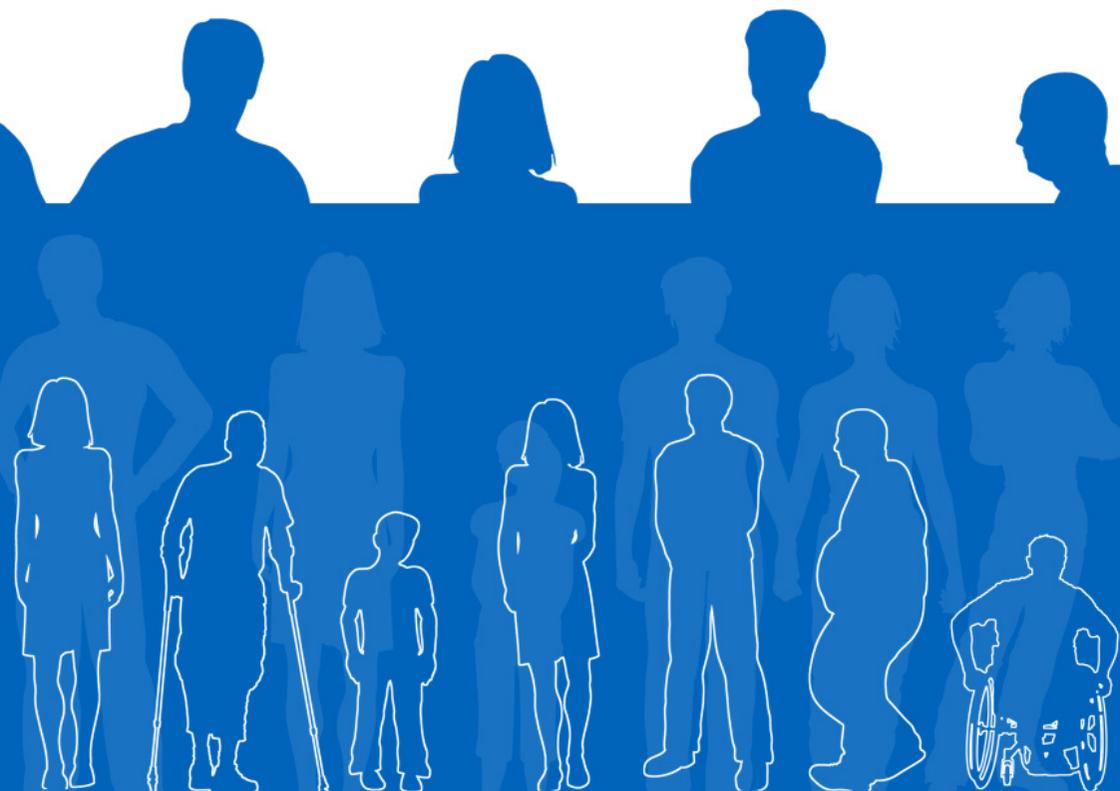


Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital



NHS Trust

A Patient's Guide to Wearing a Plaster Jacket



This leaflet is a guideline to help you cope while you are in a plaster jacket.

Now that you are wearing a plaster jacket following surgery or an injury, it is important for you to lead as normal a life as possible. Balance may be difficult for the first few days, but you will soon adapt to wearing the plaster jacket.

It is important to allow your plaster jacket to dry naturally and this can take two to three days.

Key points to remember:

- Leave your plaster jacket uncovered as much as possible
- Changing your position, supported by pillows, will help in the drying process
- Once your plaster jacket is dry, you must change your position frequently to prevent your skin from getting sore

If you have had major surgery or a back injury, you should expect to feel tired initially and it is better to rest frequently and avoid getting over-tired.

The main precautions are:

- Do not lie on your stomach following a spinal injury/spinal operation unless your doctor is happy for you to do so
- Do not lift heavy objects (not more than 1kg in each hand)
- Avoid the risk of falling
- Do not hang or be pulled up by your arm

Before you go home, it is important that your jacket is checked to make sure it is comfortable. Staff in the Plaster Theatre will check that you can:

- Move your arms easily
- Sit comfortably
- Sit and manage on the toilet, including hygiene
- Wash satisfactorily
- Position/rest yourself comfortably

When you are at home and if you have problems with your jacket, for example, the plaster cast is rubbing, feels soft, cracked/broken or gets wet, then you need to contact the Plaster Theatre. It may mean that you have to visit the hospital to have your jacket checked.

Do not scratch under your plaster jacket as this can cause a sore or an infection. If a small object falls between the plaster jacket and your skin, you must try to remove it as this will cause a sore. If you cannot, please contact the Plaster Theatre. Do not use pads or tissues under your cast as this can cause more pressure and friction and could damage your skin.

Plaster sores

A plaster sore may develop inside the jacket for a number of reasons. You may feel a rubbing or blister-like pain or discomfort and if a sore has developed it is possible that there is something wet or sticking to your skin inside the jacket. If you experience any of these symptoms, please contact the Plaster Theatre to have the jacket checked.

Activities of daily living

Sleeping

Do not sleep on your front if you have had spinal surgery, this may be different if you have had an injury (please check with the consultant).

Your bed should be firm. To get on and off the bed, use the rolling method that you were shown by the physiotherapist.

If you sleep on your side, you will need to position yourself with pillows for comfort. Place one pillow under your head, one under your armpit, to prevent the jacket digging at the front of the arm and interfering with circulation, one between your legs (for comfort) and one placed behind your back to recline onto.

Eating and drinking

You should be able to eat and drink as you did before the application of your jacket. However, try to avoid fizzy drinks as this will bloat your stomach and may give you wind pains due to trapped gas. Try to eat a well balanced diet including fruit and vegetables to prevent constipation. If you feel sick after meals, this could indicate that the jacket is too tight and pressing on your stomach. Please contact the Plaster Theatre if you experience these symptoms.

Washing

You will not be able to have a bath or shower while wearing the plaster jacket and you will need to wash using a damp flannel. Try to reach inside the jacket to clean the skin as much as possible, but without wetting the plaster. A wet jacket will eventually become soft and compromise the support your jacket provides.

Use towels to protect your plaster jacket, but if it does get wet, pat it dry with a towel and allow it to dry naturally. Do not use a hairdryer on the jacket as it will retain heat and possibly burn your skin. Check that the jacket has not become soft or cracked. If you see that it is broken in any way, please contact the Plaster Theatre to make an appointment to have the jacket reinforced. Do not use cream or talcum powder inside the jacket as this can gradually make the cast 'stale' and smell offensive. If you need to use a barrier cream, do not let it touch the jacket.

Hair washing

This can be done on the bed using a hair 'rinsor', or you may be able to stoop over a bath or basin and use the shower head. You will probably need help with this and should use plastics and towels to prevent the jacket getting wet.

Toileting

You should be able to use the toilet as normal and be able to reach to wipe yourself. Alternatively, you may find that a bedpan, urinal or standing over the toilet is an option.

Dressing

You will need a size larger in clothes to accommodate your jacket comfortably and you should be able to dress yourself. Trousers and pants should be worn over the jacket and not between the jacket and the skin, as too much bulk will increase the pressure and possibly cause sores to form.

IN THE EVENT OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, FOR EXAMPLE, YOU COLLAPSE AND/OR BECOME UNCONSCIOUS, THE JACKET CAN BE REMOVED BY ANY HOSPITAL A & E DEPARTMENT, WHO WILL HAVE THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO REMOVE THE CAST.

Contact details

Plaster Theatre

Tel: 020 8909 5467

Opening hours

Monday to Friday, 07.45 - 17.00

Occupational Therapy

Tel: 020 8909 5480/5509

Opening hours

Monday to Friday, 09.00 - 16.30

Private Patient Unit

Tel: 020 8909 5715/5889

The Scoliosis Association

www.sauk.org.uk

If you have any comments regarding this leaflet please contact the Clinical Governance Department on 020 8909 5628.

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If you need this document to be translated into another language/large print, please contact the Clinical Governance Department on 020 8909 5439.

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بقسم الإدارة الكلينيكية على الرقم
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Bu belgenin başka bir dile/büyük baskıya tercüme edilmesine ihtiyacınız varsa, lütfen Klinik Yönetim Departmanı ile temasa geçiniz: 020 8909 5439