



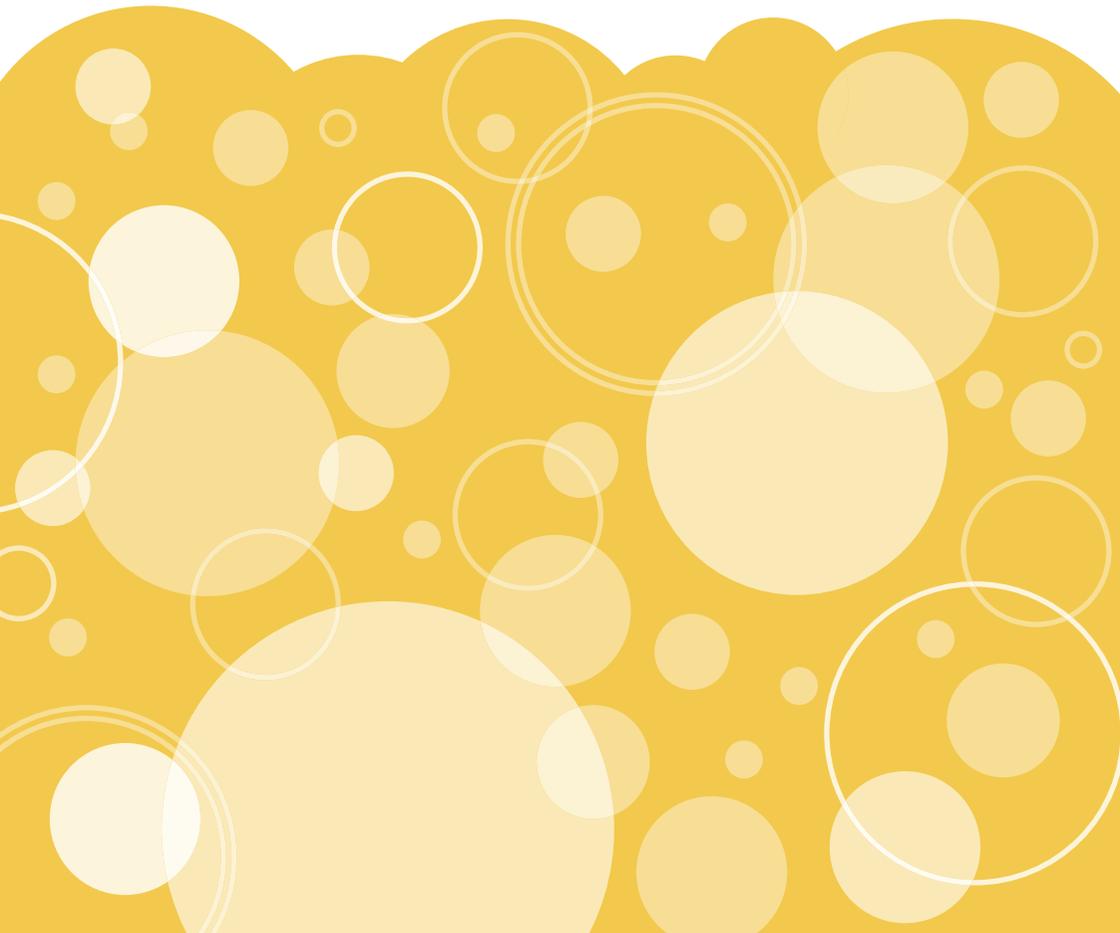
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital



NHS Trust

Plaster Theatre

Instructions for children in a leg cast





This leaflet is a guideline for caring for your leg while in a cast. If you or your parent/carer have any concerns, you should contact the Plaster Theatre for advice.

A cast is a splint used to support, prevent movement and help with bone healing following injury or an operation. There are different types of casts and casting materials and the type used will depend on the injury or operation you have had. There are also different colours available for you to choose from.

The way you need to look after your leg cast is the same, no matter what type of cast you have, or materials used. Once you have a cast put on your leg, you will need to keep your leg raised when sitting as this helps to stop your leg or foot from swelling too much. You may use a stool with cushions or pillows to do this, whatever is comfortable for you.



What should I do if my cast feels too tight?

If your cast feels too tight and your leg/toes become blue, very red or white, and you have pins and needles, numbness and the pain gets worse, keep your leg raised on pillows. If after ONE HOUR your leg/foot does not feel any better, then you or your parent/carer must contact the Plaster Theatre IMMEDIATELY or the A & E Department at your local hospital during the night or at weekends.

If your leg/foot becomes too swollen, your cast will feel very tight, which may restrict your circulation. Your cast may have to be split to make your leg/foot feel better. A bandage will be wrapped around your cast to keep your leg/foot in the correct position until it feels much better.

If you go to your local hospital with any problems, you or your parent/carer should make an appointment to have your cast reviewed in the Plaster Theatre as soon as possible. A doctor from the team who is looking after you may see you to make sure everything is okay.



What should I do if I am experiencing problems under my cast?

If you experience any burning sensation, 'blister' like pain, rubbing, wetness/stickiness or a nasty smell coming from under your cast, contact the Plaster Theatre immediately. This may mean that a wound infection or a sore is developing. A 'window' (hole) can be made in your cast so that we can look at the problem area. The doctor may want you to take antibiotic medicine or have a special dressing put on or changed as necessary.

If a 'window' is left in your cast so that you can have dressings changed, Velcro straps will be used to open and close the window. The window should always be closed securely otherwise your leg may swell through the opening, which could make your skin very sore. Once the wound or sore has healed, the window should be closed completely and this is done using the same casting material.



What should I do if it feels itchy under my cast?

Please **DO NOT** put anything inside your cast to scratch as this can cut your skin and can cause sores to develop, which may become infected. If anything accidentally falls inside your cast, please contact the Plaster Theatre to make an appointment as soon as possible to have it removed. Cold air from a fan or using wet wipes on any areas not in the cast can help you feel more comfortable.

How can I prevent my joints from becoming stiff?

To help improve your circulation and prevent joint stiffness, you should exercise all joints, which are not in the cast, as directed by your doctor.

What should I do if my cast feels loose?

Sometimes, when the swelling in your leg subsides, your cast may feel too loose. It may also become cracked or soft. If any of these happen, please contact the Plaster Theatre as soon as possible for an appointment to have your cast assessed. It may be necessary to reinforce or change the cast to ensure that the correct leg/foot position is maintained.



Can I have a bath or shower?

You may still bath or shower while in a leg cast providing you can do so safely within your own limitations and **you keep the cast dry at all times**. You or your parent/carer can buy specially designed waterproof covers to go over the cast for this purpose. Ask the Plaster Theatre staff for leaflets.

You may also need to consider how easy it will be for you to get into/out of the bath or shower while not putting weight on your affected leg. You may need someone with you to achieve this safely. It may be necessary to have a 'strip wash' if it is not possible to use your bath or shower safely. You may find it easier and more comfortable to rest your affected leg on a stool or upturned waste bin while washing at the sink or using the toilet.

Can I walk on my cast?

When you are allowed to take weight on your cast, you will be given an overshoe, which has Velcro straps to help you put it on and take it off. These straps should be done up securely. For your safety, do not walk on the plaster without this overshoe as you may slip, trip or fall.

Please remember you must always bring your crutches with you when you return for follow-up appointments as you may need them when the cast is removed.



Contact details

Plaster Theatre

Tel: 020 8909 5467

Opening hours

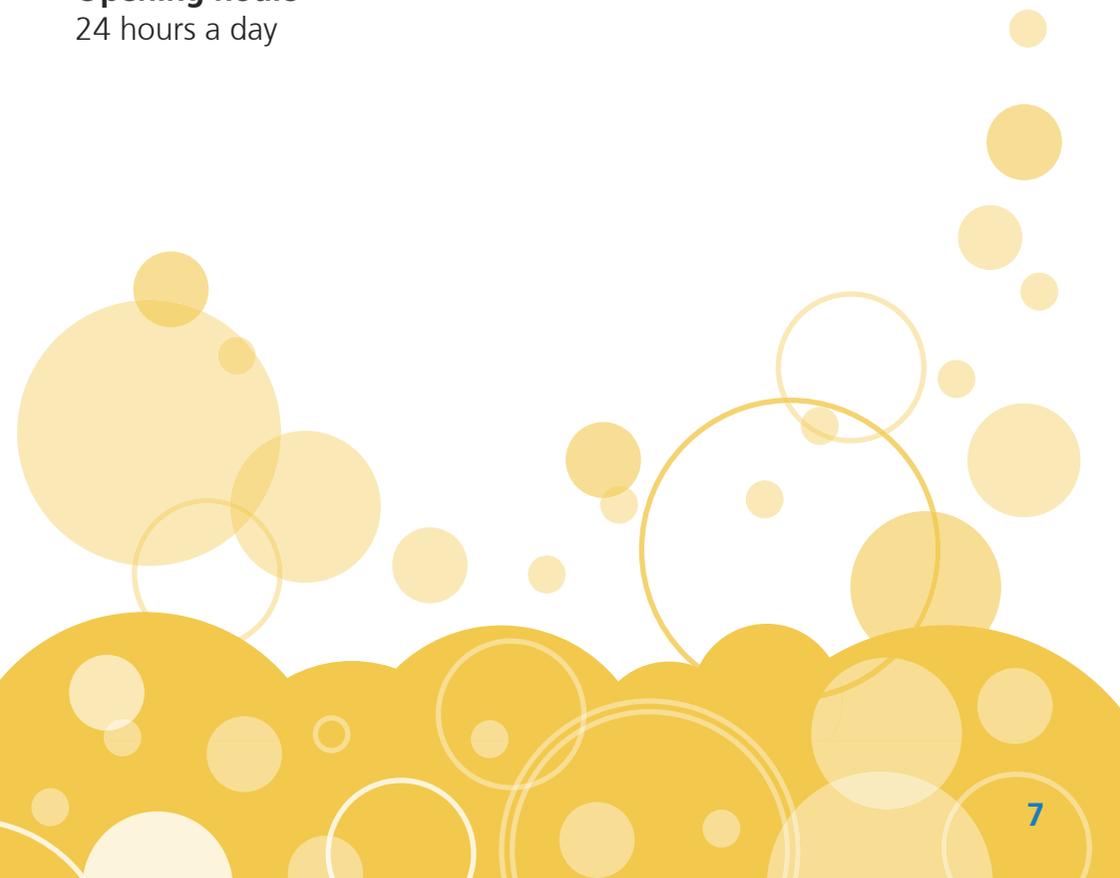
Monday to Friday, 07.45 - 17.00

Children's ward

Tel: 020 8909 5487

Opening hours

24 hours a day





If you would like this leaflet translated into another language/large print, please contact the Quality Team on 020 8909 5439.

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Author: Plaster Theatre Team