



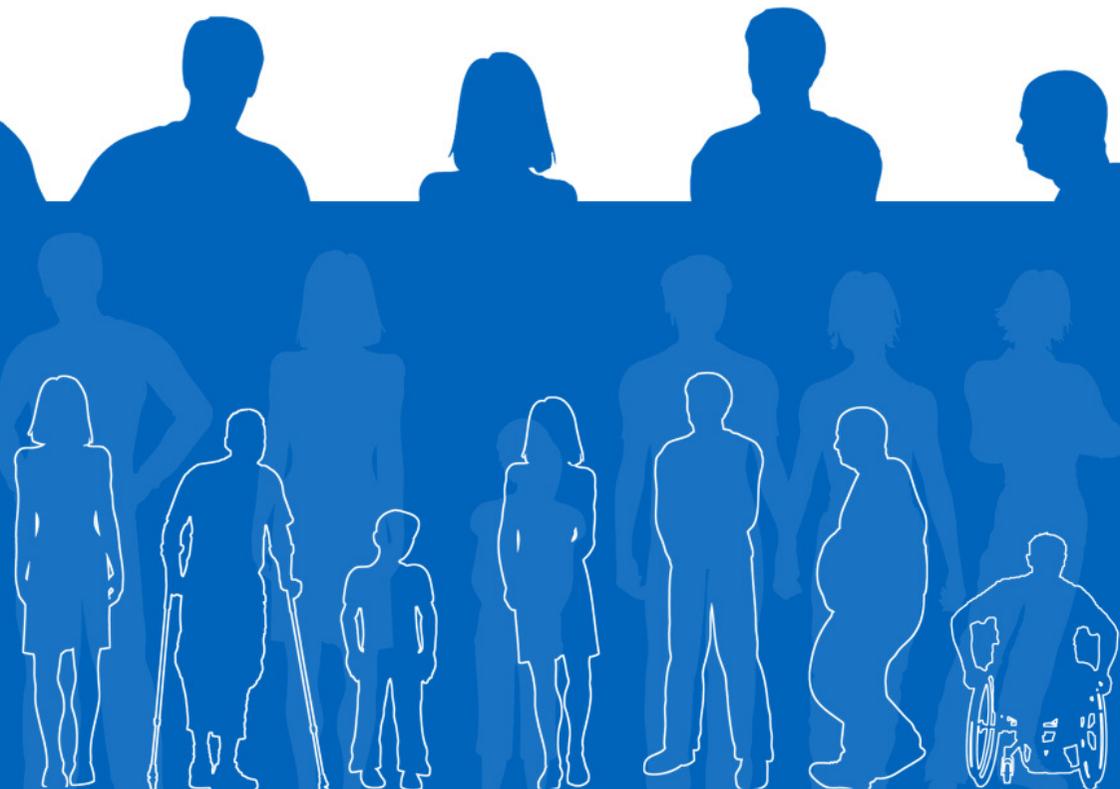
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital



NHS Trust

# Plaster Theatre

## Instructions for patients in an arm cast



This leaflet is a guideline to help you cope while your arm is in a cast.

A cast is a splint used to support, immobilise 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.

The principles of caring for all arm casts are the same, no matter what type of cast you have or which materials are used. Following application of your arm cast, you should keep your arm raised above heart level to reduce swelling. You may be fitted with a sling to keep it raised. When sitting or lying, you can keep your arm raised by using cushions or pillows for support.

## Cast too tight

If your arm or hand becomes too swollen, your cast will feel tight, which may restrict your circulation.

**If your fingers become blue, excessively red or white and you have pins and needles, numbness, increased pain and swelling, which is not relieved within ONE HOUR by keeping your arm raised above heart level, then you must contact the Plaster Theatre IMMEDIATELY or the A & E Department at your local hospital during the night or at weekends.**

Your cast may have to be split to relieve your symptoms. If you go to your local A & E Department with any problems, please make an appointment to be reviewed at the Plaster Theatre as soon as possible. If necessary, a doctor from the team looking after you will be called to come and assess your arm.

## Sore under your cast

Contact the Plaster Theatre as soon as possible if you experience any burning sensation, 'blister' like pain, rubbing, wetness/stickiness, offensive smell or actual discharge from under your cast. This may be an indication that a wound infection or a sore is developing.

## Itching under your cast

If you experience itching while wearing a cast, please **DO NOT** poke anything inside your cast to scratch as this can damage your skin. If your skin is damaged, it can cause sores to develop, which may become infected. If anything accidentally falls inside your cast, please make an appointment as soon as possible to have it removed as this can also lead to sores or an infection developing. Cold air from a fan or using wet wipes on any exposed areas can help you to feel more comfortable.

## Preventing joint stiffness

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.

## Loose/cracked cast

When your swelling subsides, your cast may become too loose and cause discomfort. It may also become soft or cracked and may not support your limb properly. If any of these happen, please contact the Plaster Theatre for assessment and possible reinforcement or change of cast.

## Personal hygiene

You may still bath or shower while in an arm cast, providing you manage to do so safely within your own limitations, and you keep the cast dry at all times. You can purchase specially designed waterproof covers to go over the cast for this purpose. Please ask the Plaster Theatre staff for information. You may also need to consider how easy it will be for you to get into/out of the bath or shower. 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.

## Contact details

### **Plaster Theatre**

Tel: 020 8909 5467

### **Opening hours**

Monday to Friday, 07.45 - 17.00

### **Private Patient Unit**

Tel: 020 8909 5715/5889

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

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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