

## ADVICE FOR A PATIENT WITH A PLASTER CAST

A plaster cast keeps the injured limb in a proper position, restricts any movement of the limb, and alleviates complaints and pain. A plaster cast hardens within 24–36 hours after placement. Synthetic casts harden in up to 2 hours.

### Maintenance of a plaster cast

- Keep the cast dry – wet plaster softens and the cast no longer serves its purpose. When taking a shower, carefully cover the plaster cast with film. Avoid using the sauna.
- Never remove the plaster cast yourself, even temporarily. Only do so if advised by the physician.
- Avoid leaning on the plaster cast for the first two days, use crutches. Thereafter, you may **ONLY** lean on the plaster cast as advised by the physician.
- In the event of the bandage becoming soiled, ragged, or loose, place a new bandage on the old one.

### Treatment at home

- Post-traumatic swelling may increase after application of a plaster cast and haematomas may develop above and below the cast. Apply a gel with heparin (e.g. Lioton 1000) on those areas. The gel is sold over the counter.
- Elevate the limb and move your toes/fingers to reduce the swelling.
- Use a cold gel pack to elevate the swelling and pain in the first three days.
- In the event of experiencing pain in the area of the fracture, elevate the injured limb; if possible, lift it above your heart. Place a pillow under the injured foot or hand at night.
- Use a triangular scarf or a special strap to hang the arm in a plaster cast around your neck.
- If the bandage on the plaster cast starts to squeeze, the bandage must be partially cut open and re-fixed with a new bandage.
- Use analgesics, if necessary.

### Immediately turn to a medical institution if:

- the plaster cast is broken or softened;
- the plaster cast squeezes or pressurises the limb and elevation does not help;
- the limb is cool, painful, and blueish;
- you experience severe itching, an unpleasant odour spreads from under the cast, and you develop a fever (above 38°C).

### Exercises for a limb in a plaster cast

- Elevate the limb and move the fingers/toes and all joints and muscles which are not covered by the plaster cast to improve circulation and reduce the swelling.
- Flex and relax the muscles under the cast to prevent the muscles from losing strength.

### After removal of the plaster cast:

- Wash the skin which was under the cast with warm water and soap and apply a fatty cream.
- Use a bandage, orthoses, etc. for a while to support the limb (especially in the case of a foot). The bandages, orthoses, etc. can be purchased from stores selling orthopaedic appliances.

North Estonia Medical Centre

J. Sütiste tee 19  
13419 Tallinn

[www.regionaalhaigla.ee](http://www.regionaalhaigla.ee)  
[info@regionaalhaigla.ee](mailto:info@regionaalhaigla.ee)