

## **Orthopedics and Sports Medicine Institute Cast Care Instructions**

1. Follow your doctor's instructions carefully regarding physical activity.
2. Keep your broken leg or arm elevated for 24-48 hours or longer to help decrease swelling. If your foot or leg is broken, elevate it on two pillows so that your ankle is higher than your knee, and keep your knee higher than your hip. If your hand, wrist or elbow is broken, keep your arm elevated on pillows above the shoulder level.
3. Moving your fingers or toes frequently will help reduce swelling and prevent joint stiffness.
4. It is very important that all casts, including both fiberglass and plaster, stay dry at all times.
5. When you shower or bathe, cover the cast with a towel first, then place a plastic bag over the towel and cast. Secure the top of the bag with heavy tape. You should still try to keep the cast out of the direct flow of water.
6. If your arm or leg itches, do not put anything under or in your cast. This could scratch or irritate your skin and become infected or cause additional problems. You may use a hair dryer on the cool setting to blow air down your cast. This should help reduce the itching.
7. Never stuff cotton or other material under the margins of the cast as it may decrease your circulation.
8. Never trim or cut down the length of your cast yourself.
9. Once you have your cast off, it will take time for the exposed area to look normal. Expect the skin to be dry and flaky. Applying lotion will help eliminate this dryness. Your arm or leg will probably be thinner or lighter because you haven't been using it. Don't be alarmed. By following your doctor's orders, you can rebuild the muscles.

**Please call our office immediately if you experience any of the following. These symptoms could be a sign of altered blood flow or a blood clot and are considered emergencies:**

- Calf pain, tightness or cramping
- Your exposed body area around the cast, such as your fingers or toes, becomes cool, numb or bluish in color.
- Significant change or increase in pain.

**Please call our office if you experience any of the following:**

- Your cast is too loose or too tight
- You feel rubbing under your cast
- Your cast softens, cracks or breaks

**Our office phone:**

**Phone: (614) 766-7989**

**Bellefontaine & Marysville phone: (877) 624-5090**

**After hours:**

**Call Doctors Hospital at (614) 544-1000. Ask to speak to the orthopedic resident on-call.**

**Remember – healing takes time.**