

# Plaster Splint Care

Your injury is being treated with a plaster splint, also called a half cast. The splint keeps your injury from moving to lessen pain and help healing. The splint does not go the whole way around the injured area like a cast. This allows for expected swelling. A splint may be used on an ankle, elbow, wrist, or other body parts where there is a fracture.

A splint may be applied in the Emergency Room, Operating Room or Clinic. Soft cotton is first wrapped around the body part to protect the skin. Plaster is applied and then wrapped with an ace wrap, also called an elastic bandage. The plaster hardens to keep the shape.

## To limit swelling

- Raise your injured arm or leg above the height of your heart as much as possible to limit swelling. For a foot or leg injury, be sure the toes are higher than your nose. Keep the heel free so there is no pressure on the skin underneath.
- You can also apply an ice bag over the splint. If the swelling does not decrease, call your doctor's office.

## Care of the splint

- Keep the splint dry. If your splint gets wet, use a hairdryer on a low setting to dry the splint. If the splint will not dry or if it is damaged, call the office and someone will change your splint.

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- Use a plastic bag to cover your splint when you shower. The plastic bag will help keep your splint dry. The plastic bag needs to be tightly secured above the splint.
- Be sure the splint is not against any hard surface when you elevate your injury. Use a pillow under the splint to limit pressure against the splint. Pressure against the splint may cause skin breakdown. For example, if the splint is on your ankle, put a pillow under your lower leg to keep pressure off of your heel.
- Do not scratch under the splint with any sharp object. You could injure the skin and increase your risk of an infection.
- **Call your doctor's office** if your splint:
  - ▶ Has rough edges or you feel like something is rubbing or cutting you.
  - ▶ Is loose and slides around your injured part.
  - ▶ Is broken or damaged.

The splint may need to be replaced to protect your injury.

### **Call your doctor right away if you have:**

- Numbness or tingling, cold or blue fingers or toes
- Extreme pain
- Swelling that is not less after raising the limb and using ice packs

- **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**