

# ARM CAST CARE

**It is important to elevate the arm to prevent and reduce swelling.**

- Hand should rest higher than the elbow and the heart.

**A sling may be recommended, but usually only for a short time.**

- Make sure the elbow rests all the way in the back of the sling.

What to watch for	How to look or feel	What to do	When to call
Swelling in hand or fingers	Look at end of cast to see if there is space between cast and skin. Compare the healthy side to the side with the cast.	Elevate the hand above the heart.	Swelling does not improve with elevation.
Pain	When your child looks uncomfortable, ask what hurts.	Give medication recommended by your provider.	Pain that is worsening or not relieved by medications.
Circulation (Blood Flow)	Gently squeeze finger on side with cast, area will become white and should return to pink within 4 seconds.	Change position to improve blood flow.	Pale or blue color, or if pink color does not return after 4 seconds.
Loss of feeling OR movement	Ask if he or she can feel and move each finger when touched. <i>Also</i> , listen for complaints of numbness or tingling (such as “feeling pins or needles”).	Elevate the hand above the heart.	Not able to feel or move fingers <i>or</i> continued complaints of numbness.
Temperature change	Feel fingers on both sides of body, they should be similar or slightly different.	Take temperature.	Fingers are <i>much</i> colder than other side <i>or</i> fever greater than 101.5 degrees.
Skin changes	Look around edges of cast.	Change position to reduce pressure.	Open skin around the cast edges.
Odor	Smell area with cast, “dirty sock” smell is normal.	Keep the exposed skin clean with soap on a damp washcloth.	Odors that are concerning to you.
Poor fit	Look at cast to watch for slipping or increasing tightness caused by swelling.	Follow elevation recommendations for swelling.	Swelling that does not improve or concerns for cast slipping too much.
Wet cast	Feel cast for dampness after wet activities.	Avoid getting the cast wet.	Cast is wet.
Broken cast	Look at and feel cast for changes in shape or hardness.	Limit activity until cast has been replaced or repaired.	Any changes to shape or hardness.

# CAST CARE FOR KIDS

## What does a cast do?

- Keeps your elbow or wrist from moving.
- Helps broken bones get better.
- Protects where you had surgery.

## Will I feel different after I get my cast?

- Your pain should get better every day.
- Your fingers may get puffy after getting a cast.
  - Raise your arm over your head when this happens.
- Your arm may feel “skinny” after a few weeks.

## What can I DO while I have a cast?

- Move your body, but you must follow your provider’s instructions for activities.
- Take care of your cast.
- Tell an adult if anything feels or looks different.
- Cover your cast with a plastic bag when you take a bath or shower.

## What should I NOT DO while I have a cast?

- Do not get the cast wet.
- Do not put **anything** in the cast, even to scratch an itch.
- Do not do anything that will change your cast or the soft materials inside.

