

Pain Management:

- Broken bones, torn ligaments and surgery can be painful, especially when you try to move.
- Your doctor may prescribe pain medication or advise you to use over-the-counter pain relievers such as acetaminophen. Talk to your doctor before taking any non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), such as ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®), as NSAIDs may delay bone healing.
- Take the pain medication as prescribed to give even pain control and promote healing.
- Remember to ice and elevate the casted or splinted limb.

Your doctor may schedule additional X-rays as you heal to make sure the cast or splint is doing its job. The healing process may take several weeks or months.

Cast Removal and Recovery:

- Your cast will be removed with a special saw that is designed to cut the cast, not your skin. You may feel a tingling sensation and warmth (vibration and heat from the saw blade) during the process.
- Your muscles and joints around the injury or surgical site may feel weak and stiff once the cast is removed. This will improve in time with exercise.
- Skin may be dry, flaky and tender. Gently apply lotion to soften the skin. Soaking in a warm bath may help. Avoid scratching as it can injure tender skin.
- Swelling may occur after the cast or splint is removed. Remember to ice and elevate.

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Cast Care Reference Guide



ST • CROIX
ORTHOPAEDICS

CARE uniquely focused on you.™

Casts and Splints:

Your St. Croix Orthopaedics doctor has decided to treat you with a cast or splint.

A broken bone, ligament injury or surgery often requires a cast or splint to immobilize the bones and ligaments as they heal.

- A cast's outer layer is made of plaster, fiberglass or both. The inner layer is usually made of soft cotton.
- A splint is a "half-cast" that allows for swelling following an injury or surgery.
- A cast often replaces a splint after swelling has decreased. A cast may also be replaced if it becomes too loose from decreased swelling.

Cast Care:

- Do daily inspections of the skin around the edges of the cast. Check for red or open areas.
- Try to avoid getting dirt, sand, powder or liquids in your cast.
- Do not pull out the cast padding.
- Do not stick anything into your cast or splint to scratch an itch. The object could break and get stuck or you could cut your skin with it. It can also cause the padding to become "bunched up" resulting in a pressure spot on your skin.
- Keep your splint or cast dry. Moisture can weaken the cast, preventing it from doing its job of immobilization. Wet cast padding can cause a rash or skin breakdown. A blow-dryer with a "cool" setting can be used to help dry a damp cast.
- When showering/bathing, place the cast in a plastic bag or cast cover. If using a bag, secure it with plastic wrap and heavy-duty tape. Do not submerge the cast or splint in water as the bag will not keep it completely dry. Sponge baths are recommended for small children.

Cast Covers for Legs and Arms Available at the Brace Place

Covers that can be used for showering and swimming.

*For fitting and purchase information, call the Brace Place at **651-275-4180**.*



Self-Care:

- Elevate your casted or splinted arm or leg on pillows or another support so it is above or at the level of your heart. Your cast/splint may feel snug for the first few days. Elevation helps decrease swelling.
- Apply ice packs to the cast to reduce swelling. Be sure to seal ice in a leak-proof bag.
- If approved by your doctor, it's OK to open and close your fingers or flex your toes up and down. Exercising fingers or toes helps prevent stiffness and improve circulation.
- If you are in a walking cast, do not walk on it until your cast technician or doctor says it is safe to do so.
- You may use a cast boot or sock over your cast to keep it clean and protected.
- A sling may be used to help support the weight of the cast.
- A fan or blow dryer with a "cool" setting may be used to relieve itching. Over-the-counter Diphenhydramine (Benadryl[®]) is another option for relief of itching. Please follow the medication's dosing instructions. Diphenhydramine can cause drowsiness.

When to Call:

Please call if...

- Your pain is getting worse and cannot be managed.
- You experience a persistent burning or stinging sensation.
- You experience numbness or tingling in the casted limb.
- Your cast or splint feels too tight or too loose.
- You cannot move your fingers or toes.
- Your fingers or toes become very swollen and discolored.
- Your cast gets damaged; has cracks, soft spots or painful rough edges.
- Your cast gets completely wet and has not dried in 24 hours.
- **DO NOT REMOVE YOUR CAST YOURSELF!**

Questions or Concerns?

Please call the Cast Technician
at: **651-439-8807** or **800-423-1088**.

