

## How to look after your splint/cast

### Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disk, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

### What is a splint/cast?

A splint/cast is a supportive device fitted and made for you to help you stretch or support a joint as part of your rehabilitation plan. This device must not be re-used or re-supplied to another person as it is for your use only. It conforms to Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) standards.

### Why have I been given a splint/cast?

Splints/casts are used to improve or maintain a range of movement at a joint and are an important part of your treatment. Your splint/cast has been issued:

- To support and realign joint position
- To increase joint stability
- To support the joints in a good position at rest
- To maintain or improve joint movement through providing stretch to muscles
- To protect the palm from damage caused by pressure from fingernails
- To enable maintenance of hand hygiene and skin integrity
- To reduce associated reactions such as increased muscle tone on activity

### When should I wear my splint/cast?

Build up tolerance gradually from 15 minutes, followed by 30 minutes, followed by 1 hour, 2 hours, then half a day, to the limit prescribed below.

You have agreed to:

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Fasten the straps so the splint feels secure but not so tight it interferes with circulation.

It is important to regularly complete your range of movement exercises after you remove your splint to help relieve stiffness.

## Things to watch out for

Please check your skin after you take off the splint/cast for unusual signs, such as:

- Swelling
- Pain or discomfort
- Redness that does not disappear after 30 minutes of removing your splint
- Numbness or pins and needles
- Increased stiffness
- Skin rash / irritation

**If you think the splint/cast has caused any of these problems, then either ask for it to be removed or stop wearing it and please contact your therapist.**

## What should I do if there is a problem with my splint/cast?

If it breaks, is damaged, needs reviewing or doesn't fit anymore please contact your therapist, please do not try to adjust it yourself.

## Cleaning my splint/cast

Remove straps and wash in warm soapy water. Dry before wearing again. Wash /wipe your splint regularly with lukewarm (not hot) soapy water and rinse. Note that the shape of your splint can be affected by direct heat such as a hot radiator, very hot water or direct sunlight.

## Further information

Please contact your therapist at:

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Address of department:

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Therapists name:

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Telephone number:

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## References

*College of Occupational Therapists and Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Neurology (2015) Splinting for the prevention and correction of contractures in adults with neurological dysfunction. [www.cot.org.uk](http://www.cot.org.uk)*

## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## **Have your say**

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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