

## CAST AND SPLINT CARE

The success of your treatment may be determined by how well you follow this advice. If you have any immediate questions or concerns, even after office hours, please call us at (423) 282-5332.

- *Splints* ("partial" casts which can sometimes be put on and removed by you) and *casts* (applied and removed by us) help protect healing tissues – particularly bones and joints.
- All splints and casts are expected to loosen, splints will need adjustment(s), and casts will need replacing at planned intervals.
- Splints and casts may be made of plaster or fiberglass, and splints may also be made of special plastics in hand therapy. *Unless told otherwise, all are to be kept clean and dry.* Waterproof plastic cast protecting sleeves can be bought in some larger drugstores.
- Wiping down the inside of a plastic splint with alcohol daily is a good way to clean and disinfect it.
- Some swelling of the fingers is normal with a hand or wrist splint/cast, and rings should be avoided. With these types of splints/casts, elevation of the hand above heart level and full movement of the fingers that aren't included will lessen their swelling, stiffness, and pain. Massaging the fingers from the fingertips backwards toward the dressing with your favorite hand lotion will also help their swelling – particularly upon awakening in the mornings or after forgetting to elevate the hand.
- Notify us immediately of:
  - A badly soiled or fully soaked, wet cast. Use a hair dryer on the lowest heat setting on the wet portion if only a small amount of water gets on the cast
  - Excessive pain, burning, or skin irritation under the splint/cast that is not controlled with pain medication, elevation of the hand, rest, etc. DO NOT push or place anything underneath a cast.
  - Excessive swelling, numbness, and/or stiffness of the digits or drainage/bleeding through the cast.
  - Excessive loosening of, or any damage to, the splint/cast. DO NOT try to remove a cast yourself.
- Plan on even the simplest tasks taking much longer to do. Be a *patient* patient!
- Avoid zippered, buttoned, and tight-fitting clothing and undergarments. In warmer months, shoes and sandals that can slip on without handling can save you time and frustration.