



IOWA
**ORTHOPAEDIC
CENTER, P. C.**

A Center of Excellence



Care of Your Cast or Splint



The correct splinting and casting of broken bones is critical to the correct healing of fractures. After the swelling is reduced and the fracture site has returned to relative normalcy, the bones are then carefully realigned, splinting or casting is then a very common method of providing protection during the healing process. This brochure provides important information you need to know.

Acute or Recent Injuries

It's important to **reduce swelling** in and around a fracture of the upper or lower extremities. When possible, this can be done by positioning yourself so that the fractured extremity is above the level of your heart and placing an ice pack wrapped in a towel over the fractured area.

Types of Casts

The two most common casts are fiberglass and plaster. These two types of casts are custom fit to the patient. A **plaster cast** allows for swelling and is commonly used for broken bones soon after the injury. Plaster casts require 24 hours to completely dry after application. **Fiberglass casts** are used when the swelling has subsided. They are longer wearing and more breathable than plaster. Fiberglass casts require 2 hours to completely dry after application.

Care of Your Cast

Casting allows the fracture to heal correctly; therefore, it's important that you take good care of your cast.

Protect your cast from damage and keep it dry. Avoid getting the cast wet during bathing by taking sponge baths.

Never place any object inside your cast. This can cause serious injury to your healing fracture and uninjured areas.

Monitor the condition of your fractured extremity. Since you, the patient, live with your fracture, you are in the best position to monitor your fracture and cast. If you notice changes, including increasing swelling, pain, burning, color changes in your skin, numbness or tingling, call our office immediately.

Continue exercising the extremity by wiggling fingers, toes, etc., of the fractured extremity, unless directed otherwise by the IOC physician.

Removal of Your Cast

Your cast will be removed by IOC casting technicians once your fracture has completely healed. The IOC casting technicians have the special equipment and tools necessary to correctly remove the cast to protect the extremity and the healed fracture from further damage. After cast removal, it's important to observe the following.

Never scratch or disturb skin that has been covered by your cast. Skin will return to normal, if it is not disturbed or irritated.

The **fractured extremity may be stiff and sore** once the cast has been removed. It may take a significant amount of time for the extremity to regain its flexibility and strength. Soaking the extremity in warm water may aid this process.

Use common sense after your cast is removed. **If something hurts, call the IOC office, don't ignore what your body is trying to tell you.**

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your fracture, please call Iowa Orthopaedic Center, at 515-247-8400.

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