

# Splinting

**This leaflet contains information for patients and their carers about splinting. If you have any further questions, please speak to the Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist caring for you.**

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## What is a splint?

A splint is a device used to help to stretch muscles which have become tight. They are made specially to fit you and may need to be adjusted over time.

In this leaflet the term splint will be used to refer to both thermoplastic splints and fibreglass casts.

## Why do I have a splint?

The splint keeps your limb/joints and muscles in the best position to help the management of your limb. It may be adjusted over time to increase the stretch.

The splint might also be used to help you when carrying out certain every day activities.

## How to look after the splint

### Do

- ✓ keep the splint away from direct heat at all times
- ✓ spot clean it with **warm** water using only a mild detergent (like washing up liquid) as required

### Do not

- ✗ leave on or near a radiator
- ✗ immerse in water – the splint is **not** waterproof and will fall apart.

**How long should I wear my splint for?**

It may be necessary to wear a splint for several hours a day to maintain the desired position or when doing certain physical everyday activities.

It is very important to follow this guidance to get the most out of your splint.

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If you have any issues, please speak with your therapist, otherwise your wearing programme is outlined at the end of this leaflet. Following your wearing programme will ensure your muscles receive an adequate stretch.

## Possible problems

Check your splinted arm or leg hourly for the first two days, and regularly afterwards for any of the following problems.

Problems	Possible cause	What to do
Persistent skin irritation or red areas	Badly-fitting splint Splint applied incorrectly Poor sensation	Remove the splint Contact your therapist if you cannot get the splint to fit correctly
Swelling	Splint is fastened too tightly Poor positioning of the limb	Loosen straps Review the instructions on how to apply the splint Make sure the limb is supported Contact your therapist if you cannot get the splint to fit correctly
Pain	Splint or straps applied incorrectly	Loosen straps Review the splint wearing programme Contact your therapist if you cannot get the splint to fit correctly

If any of these occur, stop wearing the splint immediately and let your physiotherapist or occupational therapist know so that it can be adjusted. Their contact number is at the end of this leaflet.

If you are located on a ward, then ask a nurse to help you.

**Splint details**

How to put splint on .....  
.....

How to take splint off .....  
.....

Date splint applied/made .....

Next review of splint .....

Contact person .....

Contact number .....

[illegible]

## **Contact us**

The Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Departments can be contacted on **t:** 020 7188 7188

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

## **Pharmacy Medicines Helpline**

If you have any concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

## **Your comments and concerns**

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

**t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS)    **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

**t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints)

**e:** [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)

## **NHS 111**

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 111

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