For a cast on your upper limb

**Jewellery**
Rings and bracelets will need to be removed until your cast is removed. Swelling in the hands/fingers can restrict blood supply if jewellery is worn.

**Elevation**
Elevate your affected arm as this will prevent swelling. You may be given a sling to help with this. If your arm is allowed to hang freely or is rested too low this will cause swelling making the cast feel tight and may restrict the blood flow.

**Movement**
To prevent stiffness and to improve circulation it is important to regularly move your joints that are not covered with plaster.

Further information

**Pharmacy Medicines Helpline**
If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.
- **t:** 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

**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
- **t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** 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 **w:** 111.nhs.uk

Care and management of your cast following planned orthopaedic surgery

This leaflet explains about how to look after your cast. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a healthcare professional.
What are plaster casts and why do I have one?
Your recent orthopaedic surgery will require you to wear a plaster or fibreglass cast. Casts are made up of bandage and padding, with a hard durable covering. They allow for a damaged limb to maintain a position so the surgery has time to heal, or to allow the bones to fuse. Your orthopaedic surgeon will decide how long you need to wear your cast for but it is usually four to eight weeks. It is very important you take good care of your cast.

Important things to know

Keep your cast dry
All plaster casts should be kept dry. If your cast becomes wet then you should contact the orthopaedic clinic as soon as possible. Water inside the cast can cause the skin to break down and cause infection. Do not use a hairdryer to dry your cast as this may cause burns. Waterproof covers are available to purchase, please ask a member of staff for more details.

Objects in your cast
DO NOT place or push anything inside your cast. Items that are poked or dropped in the cast can cause serious skin damage. If an object is lost inside your cast please contact the orthopaedic clinic as soon as possible.

Damage to your cast
If your cast becomes cracked, soft or damaged please contact the orthopaedic clinic for an appointment to repair the cast.

Driving
Whilst in a cast you should not drive as your insurance may not be valid. We advise you not to drive until after your cast is removed and you feel safe to control a vehicle.

Flying
Many airlines require your cast to be split before flying. Please check with your airline. If this is required please contact the orthopaedic clinic prior to your flight. It is advised that you do not fly for three months after major lower limb surgery.

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)
The symptoms of a DVT include pain in your calf and/or burning in the back of your lower leg. You may also have swelling in your calf/foot/toes and a feeling of increased warmth and heat. You may feel unwell and have a temperature. Please contact the orthopaedic clinic, your GP, NHS 111 or attend your local Emergency Department (A&E).

Contact us if:
- Your limb becomes more painful
- You feel ‘pins and needles’ or numbness in the limb with the cast
- You have any blister-like pain or rubbing under your cast
- You have discharge, wetness or smell under your cast
- Your toes or fingers become blue or swollen or you are unable to move your limbs.
- If your cast feels like it has become loose and/or feels like it is rubbing on the skin.

For a cast on your lower limb

Jewellery
All jewellery will need to be removed until your cast is removed. Swelling in the foot/toes can restrict blood supply if jewellery is worn.

Elevation
The foot on your injured leg needs to be kept raised above the height of your hip, with a pillow placed under the knee. If the leg is rested too low, swelling will occur restricting the blood flow.

Movement
A member of the plaster/nursing team will show you some exercises to do.
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Weight Bearing
Only walk on your plaster if a member of the medical staff have advised it is safe to do so. A plaster shoe will be given to you and you will be shown how to put it on.

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