Total contact casting (TCC)
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What is a total contact cast (TCC)?
This leaflet is to give you advice about your total contact cast (TCC) which has been applied because you have a diabetic foot ulcer, Charcot foot, or other foot condition.

TCC is the recognised gold standard treatment for diabetic foot ulceration and Charcot foot. The cast is designed to reduce the pressure on your foot, by offloading weight onto your leg. The cast is made of non-fibreglass tape and takes about an hour to apply.

Once you have had the cast applied you will not be able to put any weight on it for 20 minutes. After this you can walk on the cast, however, the less walking you do in the cast the better. If you need crutches or a walking aid to help you move about, the podiatrist will arrange this for you.

You may need to be in the cast for many months and in some cases over a year.
Instructions for patients

- Rest and elevate your leg as much as possible.
- Wear the casting shoe provided for you at all times when you are walking.
- Check your cast **every day** for signs of damage, moisture and staining.
- Check the skin on the other foot and leg for rubbing. To prevent rubbing on your other leg when in bed you can use a large sock or pillow case to cover the cast.
- Check on your blood sugar levels regularly.
- **Do not** try to remove the cast yourself.
- **Do not** poke anything down the cast as this could damage the skin under the cast and cause infection or further pressure sores.
- **Do not** get the cast wet. You can get a plastic cover for the cast which will keep it dry while you shower. Please ask your podiatrist for further information.
Further information

- The cast may rub and cause a wound on your foot or leg.
- You may have to come to the clinic every week to have the cast reapplied.
- Depending on the type of work you do, you may need time off work or to change your duties while you are in the cast.
- You should not drive until you have spoken to your insurance company or the DVLA.
- We do not recommend travelling abroad when you have a TCC applied. You should speak directly with your airline for advice if you are planning to fly. Some airlines will not allow you to board.
Are there any other possible complications?
Yes. A possible but rare serious complication when wearing a cast is the development of a deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

Symptoms include:
- increased or renewed pain in the leg
- pain in the calf rather than over the ulcer site
- shortness of breath
- a sharp pain in the chest which is worse when you breathe in
- swelling of limb.

When to seek advice
- If there is anything about your cast that is worrying you.
- If you notice the cast has caused rubbing or made any part of your foot or leg bleed.
- If the cast gets wet.
- If you feel unwell, tired, hot or shivery with flu-like symptoms, as this may mean that you are developing an infection.
- If you have pain or discomfort in your foot or leg.
- If your cast becomes loose, tight, stained, wet, soft, cracked, or starts to smell.
- If you are diabetic and your blood sugars become erratic.
Contact details
The foot clinic at **St Thomas’ Hospital** is open Monday to Friday, 9am-4pm. **t:** 020 7188 1981.

The foot clinic at **Guy's Hospital** is open Monday to Friday, 8am-3pm. **t:** 020 7188 2449.

If the cast is troubling you at the weekend, out of hours, or bank holidays, please go to your local Emergency Department (A&E) and ask them to take the cast off. Contact the diabetic foot clinic the next working day.

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

**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
Language and accessible support services
If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

**t:** 020 7188 8815  **e:** languagesupport@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

**NHS website**
Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.

**w:** www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust
Members of Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

**t:** 0800 731 0319  **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk

**w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership