

## **CARING FOR YOUR CHILD'S CAST**

Casting following procedures for treatment of a brachial plexus injury is usually designed to keep muscles in a lengthened position.



Here are some **important guidelines** to follow once your child has been fit with a cast.

### **DO:**

- ☐ Prevent any objects from being placed inside the cast. This includes, sand, dirt, toys, etc.
- ☐ Cover the cast while your child is eating. This helps prevent crumbs and food spills from getting into the cast.
- ☐ Keep your child cool, especially in summer months.
  - You can use a hair dryer, on a cool setting, to blow air under the cast to help cool down hot, itchy skin. Never blow warm or hot air.
- ☐ Check the cast regularly for rough edges, cracks or breaks.
  - Waterproof tape can be applied around the edges to protect the gauze. You may also apply a small amount of padding if an edge looks rough.
- ☐ Encourage your child to move their fingers on a regular basis to promote blood flow.
- ☐ Carry your child from the hips, not by the arm or around the cast, as this may cause the cast to shift positions.
- ☐ Keep your child entertained with stories and games, especially in the first few days, as they get used to the cast.
  - If your child is walking, ensure all areas are free of tripping hazards, as they learn new balance points with weight of the cast. They will also not have the same ability to protect themselves if they fall.

### **Non-waterproof cast liner**

- ☐ Keep the cast clean and dry.
  - Unless instructed otherwise, the cast must be kept dry. During the casting period it is best to sponge bath your child. Place a towel over the cast to minimize any splashing.
  - If the cast gets splashed you can use a hair dryer on cool or low to help dry it. If it gets very wet, the cast needs to come off within 24 hours.

### **Waterproof cast liner**

- ☐ If the doctor approves, you may get the cast wet. You can use soapy water, but rinse thoroughly with clean water.
- ☐ Move your child in different positions so that the water can drain out thoroughly, then let the water evaporate out of the cast.
- ☐ Do not try to place a towel inside the cast.
- ☐ If the lining shifts, contact your doctor.

### **DO NOT:**

- ☐ Pull the gauze out from under the cast
- ☐ Scratch the skin under the cast.
- ☐ Put powders or lotions inside the cast.

### **When to call your child's doctor:**

Contact your family doctor or health care provider if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever greater than 38.5 degrees Celsius
- Increased pain
- Increased swelling above or below the cast
- Drainage or bad smell from the cast
- Cool or cold fingers
- Complaints of numbness or tingling