



# PALM BEACH ORTHOPAEDIC INSTITUTE, P.A.

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### CAST CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Swelling around the broken bone can increase anywhere from one to three days after the fracture. This will make the cast feel tighter and make the pain worse. Swelling is best reduced by elevating the cast above heart level. This generally requires you to be lying down, as a sling is not high enough if you are sitting, and a footstool is not high enough for a leg cast. Think of water running downhill from the fractured bone to the heart when deciding how to elevate.

Use up to three pillows for a leg cast and five pillows for an arm cast. Elevation should continue until the swelling and cast tightness goes away.

Gently exercising the fingers or toes may also help reduce swelling. Also, they may look purple for a few days as your body gets used to the cast. If you press on the nails and the pink color returns quickly, the purple is not a problem. If they stay white for a long time, call the office.

Ice is helpful and may make the pain improve. Place a **WELL SEALED** bag of ice on the injured extremity for 30 minutes at a time 4 times a day for the first 24-48 hours after injury.

You should never insert anything down the cast to scratch. If you do so, you risk cutting your skin beneath the cast which could result in an infection. If you think there is something in the cast, please call the office. Anything in a cast can wear a hole in the skin and become infected or cause a scar. We recommend avoiding the beach. Sand in a cast becomes sandpaper and can injure the skin.

Itching can be relieved by taking Benadryl or using a hairdryer on the cool setting. If you have a waterproof cast you may run water through the cast.

Most of the time we use waterproof casting material and you may bathe or swim normally. The water will drip out for a few minutes then the cast will dry. Keep the cast clean at all times. If you do not have a waterproof cast it must stay dry. When bathing, wrap it in a plastic bag and keep it out of water. There are commercially available products for sale on the internet to keep the cast dry in water.

**If your pain is not controlled after ice, elevation and taking medication, please call the office immediately at 561-694-7776.**

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