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Introduction
Plaster casts are a common treatment for a broken bone and for ligament or tendon injuries in your arm or leg. Plaster casts are made up of a bandage and a hard covering (usually plaster of Paris). The cast will not be completely hard and dry for at least 24 to 48 hours. They usually need to stay on your arm or leg for four to twelve weeks, depending upon:

- the type of fracture/injury
- your age
- your general health.

Plaster cast care advice
- Keep your arm or leg raised on a pillow for the first 12 hours and rest. This will help any swelling to go down. Continue to do this for another 12 hours if the cast still feels tight.
- Don’t get your plaster cast wet. This will weaken it and your bone/injury will no longer be properly supported.
- Even if the plaster cast makes your skin feel very itchy, don’t be tempted to poke anything underneath it – this could cause a nasty sore. The itchiness should settle down after a few days.

Plaster cast tips
- Don’t let any small objects fall inside your cast, as they could irritate your skin.
- Don’t try to alter the length or position of your cast.
- Don’t lift anything heavy or drive until the cast has been removed.
- Use crutches or a sling, as advised by your health professional.

Plaster cast problems
You should return to your nearest Emergency Department if:

- your plaster cast still feels too tight after keeping it elevated for 24 hours
- your fingers or toes on the affected limb feel swollen, tingly, painful (even after taking painkillers) or numb
- your fingers or toes turn blue or white
- your cast feels too loose
- your cast is broken or cracked
- the skin underneath or around the edge of your cast feels sore
- there is an unpleasant smell or discharge coming from your cast.