

Care After Total Contact Cast Application

Total Contact Cast

You will be going home with a total contact short leg-walking cast. Do not put weight on your newly-casted foot. This includes walking or standing only on that leg. The cast covers your toes to keep all objects out of the cast.

Purpose of a Total Cast Boot

Each time you take a step, the sole of your foot takes the weight of your entire body. This causes lots of pressure on the sole of your foot.

Over time, this pressure can delay the healing of your ulcer or make the ulcer bigger. A total contact cast spreads the weight over your entire foot. This puts less pressure in the ulcer, letting it heal.

Your cast fits tightly to keep your foot from moving inside the cast. If your leg moves more than one-quarter inch, the cast is too loose. Call your health care provider if this happens.

How to Use a Total Contact Cast

- Do not walk with your cast or put weight on your casted leg for the first 6 hours after it is put on.
- Always wear your cast boot when walking.
- Walk as you usually do: heel to toe, placing the weight on the center of your foot. Do not stand on your tiptoes or push off from your toes. This can cause dents or soft spots in the front of your cast. Dents and soft spots may lead to pressure on your toes.

Your Health Care Provider

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

- Limit your walking each day to one-third your normal routine.
 - Walk 20 to 30 minutes at one time.
 - Walking for more than 30 minutes can delay the healing of your ulcer.
- Do not remove the cotton-type padding under your cast. Check for pressure or red areas on each brim of your cast.
- Do not kick or hit objects with your cast. This can cause dents, cracks or softened areas on your cast. Call your health care provider if you have any of these.
- Keep your cast dry. Water will destroy your cast and irritate your skin. Take a sponge bath and use a plastic bag or cast cover. (You may buy cast covers at a drug store.)
- Do not try to scratch your skin underneath the cast. Using coat hangers, knitting needles or other “foreign objects” can cause an infection. To help relieve the itch, use a hairdryer on the coolest setting and aim the air over the cast opening. Call your health care provider if you have an itch that won't go away.

(over)

- Look at the skin at the top of your cast. Use a mirror to look at the bottom of your cast. The drainage will be brownish or dark yellow.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

You will need to call your health care provider if you have any of the following:

- increased pain
- lack of movement
- change in color of casted body part
- lower back pain
- pain in your groin of the affected leg
- sudden onset of a fever or a temperature higher than 100 F
- tightness due to swelling
- movement greater than one-quarter inch inside the cast
- pressure in your toes
- pain or pressure in the cast
- dents, cracks or soft spots on the cast
- foul-smelling odor of the cast
- any drainage on the outside of the cast.

Cast Removal

Only a health care professional can remove your cast. After the cast comes off, you can wash your foot in warm water and use lotion to soften the skin. Looking at the sole of your foot every day and wearing special shoes are important to keep the ulcers from coming back.

Follow-up Appointment

Call your health care provider for a follow-up appointment.

If you have any questions about the exam, please call your health care provider.