



Emergency Department

Backslab Advice

Information for Parents/ Carers

What is a 'backslab'?

Your child has had a plaster applied called a 'backslab'- this is partly plaster and partly bandage, to allow for some swelling that happens immediately after an injury occurs.

It is important once your child goes home from hospital that the plaster is cared for correctly.

A cast is a medical device and must be used correctly at all times.

The role of the plaster cast is to keep the limb in a certain position and protect the area that has been treated whilst it heals.

When first applied the plaster cast usually takes 48 hours to dry completely. Allow it to dry naturally and keep it away from direct heat.

Common symptoms

Pain

Mild pain is quite common following an injury or surgery and it may be treated with prescribed medication. Pain relief will not cure the pain, but will reduce if given especially for several days after the injury.

Please attend the Emergency Department immediately if:

- Your child is experiencing or developed severe pain in the affected arm/leg
- Your child complains of experiencing a burning sensation under the cast
- You have noticed problems with damaged skin or foul smells coming from the cast

For keeping comfortable at home:

- Elevation of your child's limb for example keeping the arm or leg on several pillows when resting at home
- Keep the limb that is in plaster cast raised above the level of your child's heart as much as possible.
- If your child has been given a sling, always use it to keep the arm raised when moving about.
- Remove the sling when your child is sleeping
- Make sure your child uses walking aids such as crutches if you have been advised to do so and been shown how to use them safely
- If your child is unable to use crutches or access the stairs safely, encourage your child to 'bum shuffle' to go up or down the stairs safely.

Signs and symptoms to come back to see a medical professional for:

- The skin may look pale or blueish in colour
- The fingers or toes are cold, or hot to touch

- Your child may say they have pins and needles or numbness
- Your child may not be able to move their fingers or toes

It is common to get some swelling of the fingers or toes around the plaster cast.
Check if the plaster cast is not too tight and there is a gap between cast and skin
Encourage your child to wiggle and move their fingers and toes frequently to help the blood to circulate

It is common for the skin under the plaster to get itchy
Do check your child's skin every day for any areas that may seem irritated or areas your child feels are uncomfortable.

Do not use lotions, powders or oils under or around the plaster cast

Do not push anything between the cast and the skin, as this can cause damage to the skin lead to infection.

This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

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