

# SPICA CAST CARE

## General Information

A spica cast (body cast) may be used to treat a femur fracture, to immobilize the hip following a surgical procedure, or to stabilize a dislocated hip. It involves placing casting material from the nipples down to the toes on one or both sides. An opening is made at the perineum (genital area) to allow for urine and stool elimination.

## Spica Cast Care Tips

### 1. ALLOW THE CAST TO DRY

A plaster cast will take approximately 24-48 hours to dry; a fiberglass cast is dry in approximately 20 minutes. Turn the child frequently (every 2 hours) to allow for complete drying and to prevent sores from developing inside the cast. The child may be placed on his/her side, back or stomach as long as support is provided and he/she is positioned safely.

### 2. CIRCULATION CHECKS

Observe for swelling in the feet and toes, especially in the first 8 hours. Elevation of lower extremities helps prevent some swelling. If toes become discolored, swollen or cool, or if pain becomes severe, please notify **Orthopedics For Kids, PC at 933-8588**.

### 3. HYGIENE

Hygiene is important to keep your child comfortable. Sponge bathing will be necessary until the cast is removed. DO NOT allow the cast to be submerged in water. While bathing, check the skin, especially at the cast edges, for redness, blisters or sores.

If your child is not toilet trained, Serenity® pads or disposable diapers may be tucked snugly into the perineal opening. These must be checked often (every 2 hours) and removed promptly when soiled to avoid urine or stool from soiling the cast padding and irritating the skin. Placing the child in an upright position or resting with the head of the bed elevated may help prevent urine from running back into the cast.

The Procel® Cast padding and a Gortex® Pantaloon is made to provide a barrier to soilage; this should benefit your child by:

- Reducing odor
- Improving hygiene
- Eliminating soiled padding

The Pantaloon allows perspiration and moisture vapor to escape from the cast while providing a barrier to *liquid*. Therefore urine and stool cannot pass through the Pantaloon to soil the padding. Take special care not to damage or tear the cast liner. Do NOT use any oils, oil-based lotions or powder inside or near the cast as it may interfere with the performance of the Pantaloon and could cause discomfort or irritation to the skin.

Do not pull out or rearrange the cast padding or place additional padding inside the cast.

Constipation may occur due to decreased activity. Fruit juices and raw vegetables provide fiber may help prevent this condition. If it persists, a laxative such as a glycerin suppository may be used.

Be sure to cover the cast with a towel, shirt or bib while your child is eating to prevent food or drink from falling into the cast.

#### 4. TRANSPORTATION

With the added weight of the cast and awkward positioning of the lower extremities, children are often difficult to lift and maneuver. Wagons or reclining wheelchairs may be useful as a means of transportation outside of the home.

Most children in spica casts are unable to fit into a regular car seats. You may need to be provided with a special harness to secure your child for travel.

#### 5. CLOTHING

If your child was placed in a Pontoon spica, large leg shorts or pants may be split on the side and Velcro or ties sewn in place in order to cover the cast. Loose shirts or dresses may also be worn.

#### 6. HOMEBOUND TEACHERS

School-age children are often unable to return to school for 6-8 weeks due to immobilization in the spica cast. Appropriate referrals and requests will be made prior to your discharge home if needed.

### Contact Your Physician or Nurse If:

- Your child has new or increasing pain or swelling
- Your child develops a fever greater than 101° contact your pediatrician first to evaluate the ears, nose or throat as a source for the fever
- Your child develops a blister or sore inside the cast, or develops redness at the cast edges
- You notice any unusual odor from the cast
- The cast becomes badly soiled, develops a soft spot or breaks
- You have any questions regarding your child's care



2660 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South • POB 1 • Birmingham, AL 35205 • 205-933-8588

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