

Splint Care

What is a splint?

A splint supports and protects your bones and the surrounding tissue, holding them in place while they heal. Your healthcare provider may give you a splint after an injury or surgery.

Splints give less support than a cast. They can be tightened or loosened so are often used when the injured area has a great deal of swelling.

They can be custom-made to fit your injury or they can come ready-made in many shapes and sizes.

How do I take care of my splint?

You need to protect your splint from damage so that it can help you heal. If you have an injured foot or leg, you will probably get crutches to help you get around while wearing the splint. If you have a hand or arm injury, you may also get a sling to help support the injury. Follow these recommendations to protect your splint:

- **Keep it dry.** When taking a bath or shower, cover the splint with a waterproof barrier that fits snugly at the end that is closest to your body. **Do not put it under water!**
- **Keep it clean.** Don't let any dirt, sand, or powders get inside your splint.
- **Don't scratch the itch.** Don't put anything inside the splint to scratch itchy skin. Try to distract yourself instead.
- **Check your skin.** If the skin around your splint becomes raw, red, or irritated, contact your doctor.



When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor or go to the nearest emergency room if you feel any of the following in the arm or leg that has the splint:

- Your pain is increasing or is more than expected when moving your fingers or toes
- You are feeling burning, numbness, or tingling in your hand or foot
- It's getting harder to move your fingers and toes
- Your fingers or toes are turning white or blue
- Your fingers or toes are colder than the rest of your body

How do I take care of my injury?

Your splint will likely feel snug at first, but should not be tight. It's common to have mild swelling and bruising of the injured area during the first few days. To help you feel more comfortable and reduce the risk of complications:

- **Elevate (raise) your injured arm or leg.** When sitting or lying down, use pillows to prop your arm or leg to the level of your heart. This can help reduce swelling.
- **Use ice to help with swelling.** Put a bag of ice or frozen vegetables on the affected area for a maximum of 20 minutes every 2 hours. Do this for the first 24 to 48 hours to keep swelling down.
- **Take your pain medication exactly as ordered by your doctor.** Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as acetaminophen [ah-seat-uh-MIN-oh-fen] (Tylenol) and ibuprofen [eye-byoo-PRO-fen] (Motrin / Advil) usually work well.
- **Do not remove your splint,** unless you are told to do so by a doctor or nurse.
- **Go to all of your follow-up appointments.**

My next follow-up appointment

Date/Time:_____

Place: _____

Doctor: _____



Notes

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