

Let's Talk About...

Hip spica cast

A hip spica (SPY-cuh) cast is a long cast that begins at the chest. It may cover one leg or foot or both legs with or without the feet. A hip spica cast helps keep your child's body still so bones and tendons can heal or doctors can correct a problem.



Why does my child need a hip spica cast?

Your child may need a hip spica cast if they have:

- Hip dysplasia
- A broken femur (upper leg bone)
- Recently had hip or pelvis surgery

What should I do before taking my child home?

Before taking your child home from the hospital, talk to a physical therapist about a special car seat and wheelchair your child may need.

How do I care for my child at home?

After taking your child home from the hospital:

- Have your child lie down on their back, side, or stomach for 1–2 days with their head raised and the cast supported to help reduce swelling.
- Raise the cast and put ice bags on the side of the cast (never on top in case of leaks) to prevent swelling during the first 24 hours.
- Hold them in an upright position after 1–2 days.
- Don't let your child stand or walk in the cast unless their doctor says it's okay.
- Watch them carefully so they don't roll or fall.

How do I protect my child while they wear a hip spica cast?

To protect your child from pressure sores and infection:

- Turn them every 2–4 hours during the day and at least once a night while supporting your child's joints with pillows.
- Use pillows, blankets, or towels for support and to keep too much pressure from hurting your child's body.
- Check every day to make sure the cast isn't too tight or too loose.
 - If your child says it is tight or feels pain, tingling, or numbness, try raising their legs for 1 hour or more.
 - If your child doesn't speak, see if they can move their toes. If they can't move them like they used to or you notice swelling, raise their legs for 1 hour or more.
 - If your child's leg is still swollen or they are in pain, call their doctor. A cast that is too tight can cut off the blood supply to the leg or damage nerves.

- Make sure your child's toes are pink and feel warm. If they become swollen or discolored or can't be moved easily, call your child's doctor.
- Always secure your child in chairs, beds, and car seats, and on couches using pillows or blankets for support. The cast's weight can cause balance problems and may make your child fall.
- Keep crib safety rails up if your child still uses a crib.

How do I take care of my child's skin?

To care for your child's skin while they wear the hip spica cast:

- Check their skin every day for red or swollen areas, breaks in the skin, or bad odors inside the cast.
 - If there are any red areas, change your child's position to remove pressure on that area.
 - If the area stays red for 30 minutes after pressure is removed or you notice bad odors or breaks in the skin, call your child's doctor.
- Don't let your child stick any objects under the cast; this may hurt the skin.
- Use only your fingertips to reach into the cast and rub the skin gently if your child's skin is itchy. You can also use a hair dryer set on cool to blow air into the cast.
- Give your child a sponge bath every day instead of a shower or tub bath so the cast doesn't get wet. Use plastic wrap and towels to protect the cast, and wash all skin not covered by the cast.
- Don't use lotion or powder at the cast edges. These may build up or cause irritation by making the skin softer.

How do I take care of my child's hip spica cast?

To protect your child's hip spica cast:

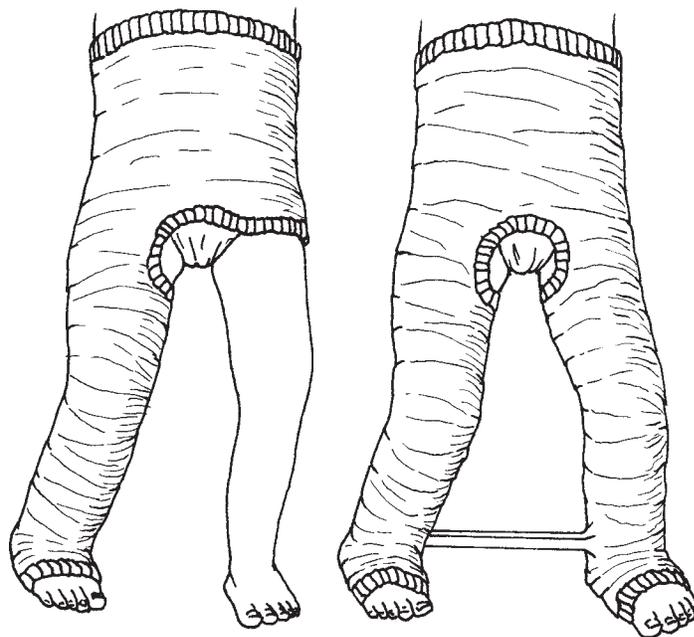
- Keep it as clean and dry as possible.
- Call your child's doctor if the cast gets wet and softens, cracks, or loses its shape.
- Use a damp washcloth to clean the cast if it becomes dirty, and keep the area uncovered until it's completely dry.

- Let friends and family write on the cast, but don't use paint on the cast.
- Make sure plastic can't be pulled off the edges of the cast (children can choke on pieces of plastic).

What activities can my child do?

Since your child can't move much on their own, you should plan enjoyable play activities.

- Take your child outside in a wagon, stroller, or reclining wheelchair to get fresh air.
- Borrow books, audiobooks, and movies from the library.
- Encourage your child's friends to visit and plan simple group activities.
- Put a drink, toys (nothing small that can get caught in the cast), video games, and a remote within your child's reach.
- Hold small children as often as possible to soothe them.



How can my child use the bathroom?

If your child is toilet-trained, a nurse will give you a fracture bedpan to use before you take your child home. You can use this or hold them over the toilet to go. The bedpan has a flattened end you can put under your child's bottom. To use the fracture bedpan:

- Turn your child to the side opposite the injured side or surgical site.
- Put the bedpan under your child’s bottom, and then turn them back onto the bedpan. Check between their thighs to make sure the bedpan is in the right spot.
- Keep your child’s head and upper body raised using pillows or folded blankets so the urine flows down and away from the cast.

If your child is not toilet trained, use a disposable diaper and tuck it into the cast.

- Change the diaper as soon as it becomes wet or soiled.
- Cut the diaper smaller to fit properly if you need to.
- Put a sanitary napkin inside the diaper for extra absorbency.

Make sure to keep the cast clean and dry while your child uses a bedpan or you change their diaper. If they wet or soil their bed, change the sheets immediately.

What can my child wear while they have a hip spica cast?

Let your child wear familiar, comfortable clothing, like loose skirts, dresses, sweat pants, or shorts. Your child can wear underwear a few sizes larger than normal over the cast.

Dress babies or toddlers in larger sleepers with snaps at the crotch and at both legs. In cold weather, cover your child’s toes with large socks that fit over the foot of the cast.

Notes

Intermountain Healthcare complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Se proveen servicios de interpretación gratis. Hable con un empleado para solicitarlo. 我們將根據您的需求提供免費的口譯服務。請找尋工作人員協助

What can my child eat?

Your child should eat healthy foods while the cast is on, including fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain breads to prevent constipation. They should also drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration. Have your child eat small meals often rather than 3 big meals to keep the cast from feeling tight over their stomach.

Before eating, put a large towel, bib, or shirt on your child to prevent food and crumbs from falling down into the cast.

When should I call my child’s doctor?

Call your child’s doctor if:

- Your child has severe pain, loss of feeling, or burning inside or below the cast that doesn’t go away with medicine, raising the casted area, or rest.
- The cast is tight or you notice swelling that doesn’t go away when your child rests or you raise the cast.
- The toes on the cast side are colder or more discolored than the toes on the opposite side.
- Your child has more and more trouble moving toes on the cast side compared to the other side.
- Your child has a fever (temperature higher than 101° F).
- There is an unusually foul odor coming from inside the cast.
- There is broken, blistered, or irritated skin around the cast edges.
- The cast is cracked, broken, or loose.
- There is an object inside the cast you can’t get out with your fingers.