



Spica Cast Care Instructions

Your child is in a spica cast for treatment of a fracture or after hip surgery. Here are some tips to help you care for your child at home.

How do I put a diaper on my child with a spica cast?

We recommend **3 layers** of protection to help keep the cast as clean and dry as possible.

1. Use a small adult **incontinence pad** (Poise or Depends) to place into the diaper opening. These pads are sold in the store next to adult size diapers.
2. Place a **small baby diaper** over the incontinence pad and tuck it under the edges of the cast in the diaper opening. Usually a size 1 or 2 will work. You can cut off the Velcro tabs to make it fit better.
3. Use a **large baby diaper**, size 5 or 6, on the outside of the cast to help hold the small diaper and pad in place.

Check your child for wet diapers every hour during the day and at least once during the night. **Change their wet or soiled diaper as soon as possible** to avoid urine or stool from soaking into the cast.

How do I prevent soiling of the cast?

- Place plastic tape on the edges of the diaper area to act as a barrier to prevent wetness from soaking into the cast padding.
- Position your child with their upper body elevated to promote urine to flow down into the diaper instead of up under the cast. Place a pillow under the mattress for elevation during sleep times.
- Dry damp or wet casts by using a hair dryer on the cool air setting to blow air under the padding.
- Dab a small amount of wintergreen or peppermint oil on a cotton ball onto the **outside** of the cast to cover up odors.

How do I position my child throughout the day?

- Change your child's position every 2 hours to prevent pressure on the skin under the cast.
- Put your child on their stomach 2-3 times per day to relieve pressure on the back side.
- Use pillows or blanket rolls to give your child support when positioned on their side or stomach.
- Use a bean bag chair. A bean bag is a good positioning device because it will mold around the cast and allow your child to be more upright.
- Make sure your child's heels are propped off the bed to prevent sores from developing under the cast.

How do I bathe my child?

While your child is in a cast, sponge bathing is the only way to bathe your child and keep the cast from getting wet. You can use baby wipes in the diaper area to clean the best you can.

How do I feed my child while keeping the cast clean?

- Position your child in an upright position for eating.
- Cover the cast with a t-shirt or bib to prevent crumbs or drinks from going under the cast.

What clothing should my child wear?

Longer shirts or dresses for girls are the easiest. A onesie in a larger size than usual may also work well. Some sweat pants or stretchy shorts may fit over the cast. The cast will be warm once it is dry so be careful not to overdress your child.

What car seat should I use for my child?

Most children do not fit into their car seat while in a spica cast. Special arrangements will be made in the hospital by your doctor's team to get a safe car restraint. Many insurance plans do not cover the fees for the car restraints.

What do I need to watch out for?

Circulation

Check the circulation in your child's toes several times a day. You can tell if your child's circulation is working well if they can move their toes in response to your touch and the color of their nail beds is normal. To tell if the color is normal put (or apply?) light pressure on their toenail. This will cause the color to be paler. When you release the pressure, you want to see the coloring quickly return. Elevating the legs can relieve circulation problems and swelling in the toes. If the circulation and/or swelling do not improve with elevation, call your doctor's office.

Skin

Check the skin around all the edges of the cast every day. Watch out for bright red areas, blisters or sores. If you see any of these problems, call your doctor's office. Be careful not to pull out any padding from under the cast as this can make a rough edge. A rough edge of the cast can be covered with plastic tape to make it smoother.

Signs of Infection

Incision areas are often under the cast and cannot be seen. Call your doctor's office if you see any of the following signs that may indicated an infection:

- fever of 101°F or more
- unusual fussiness
- pain that is not controlled by pain medication,
- unusual odor from under the cast

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