

# Short leg cast care and exercises



## Your cast

Your leg has been injured and you have to be in a cast for a period of time to allow the injury to heal.

### Do:

- Keep your cast clean and dry.

When showering:

- ✓ Wrap a towel around the cast to absorb any water that may leak in
- ✓ Place a plastic bag around the cast with tape to ensure a snug fit.

Ask your insurance company if you are able to drive without affecting your insurance.

### Do not:

- ✗ Insert any objects under the cast to scratch an itch. If you place objects under the cast you could get a skin wound that you lead to an infection. Instead tap on the outside of the cast over the itch.
- ✗ Place any additional padding inside the cast.
- ✗ Break off or trim the edges of the cast, or try to repair the cast.

### If you are having any of the following problems with the cast go to the Emergency Department to get it adjusted:

- rubbing on the skin or you feel burning in the cast.
- if it feels too tight.
- if it starts to become too loose, cracks or breaks.
- if you notice any unusual smell from the cast (some odour is normal).

## Swelling

After any injury or surgery to your leg, your foot and ankle will swell. To limit swelling you should:

- ✓ Keep the injured leg elevated by placing your foot on a stool where your foot is higher than your knee.
- ✓ Move your toes for five minutes every hour to help maintain circulation to your foot.

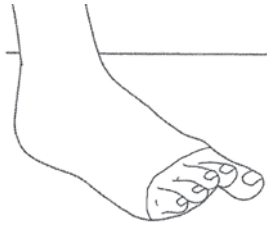
If the swelling is not improving, or you feel numbness and tingling that is not relieved after 15 minutes of elevation and exercise, go to the Emergency Department and get the cast changed.



## Exercises

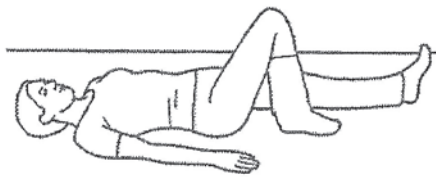
When you have a cast on your leg, your joints become stiff and the muscles become tight and weak. To help keep all the other joints around the cast moving, do the following exercises 3 times a day. It is normal to feel some stretching or pressure and even some mild pains during the exercise. These should ease off with stopping the movement.

If you are feeling strong pain with any of the exercises, stop doing that exercise. Check with your physiotherapist or orthopaedic doctor before starting again.



Move your toes up and down for 60 seconds.

If you feel they are very stiff you can use your hand to move the toes backward and forward.



Bend and straighten your knee as far as you can comfortably.

Do this 10 times.



With your knee straight, lift your leg about 10 centimetres off the bed.

Do this until tired or up to 10 times.



Lift your leg out to the side to keep your hip strong.

Do this until tired or up to 10 times.

For any questions contact Physiotherapy Departments on the following phone numbers:

Gosford ..... 4320 3314

Wyong..... 4394 8217

Woy Woy ..... 4344 8446

Long Jetty..... 4336 7752

This brochure contains general information for patients being treated at Central Coast Local Health District. It is not a substitute for more detailed information from the Orthopaedic and Physiotherapy Department (OPD). If any exercise causes more than mild discomfort, stop and seek advice from the OPD.