How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?
Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk
Follow us on Twitter @buckshealthcare
Introduction

This information leaflet is for patients after having a plaster cast put on their hand or arm. It outlines the general care of a cast.

General Care

• Rings and jewellery on the arm/ hand must be removed before a cast is applied.
• Plaster of Paris cast take up to 48 hours to dry so please be extra careful with them in the first few days.
• Do not get the plaster wet as it may come apart or cause irritation to the skin. Casts can be covered with a water tight plastic bag for showering.
• Please look after your cast. Do not cut, heat or place any objects into the cast. This includes; coins, tissues, knitting needles or rulers.
• Do not try and use or move your hand in the cast unless specifically instructed by your Doctor or Physiotherapist.
• Ensure that you do not rest your plastered arm/hand for long periods of time in the same position. This can cause pressure damage to your skin.
• Keep all joints not enclosed in the cast moving freely. This includes shoulders and elbows.
• Please keep the cast up as much as possible.
• Do not remove your cast unless instructed by a Doctor or Physiotherapist.

Contact

If you have any concerns regarding your cast please contact:

Stoke Mandeville Hospital 01296 315000
Plastics Nurse bleep 774 or Plastics Doctor bleep 524

Alternatively from Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm
Plaster Room -Stoke Mandeville Hospital
01296 315743

Plaster Room –Wycombe Hospital 01494 425452

In an Emergency please attend:

Accident & Emergency Department Stoke Mandeville Hospital or Minor Injuries & Illness Unit (MIIU) Wycombe Hospital
Driving:

Your insurance may not be valid whilst you are being treated in a plaster cast. We recommend that patients NOT drive whilst in a cast.

Flying:

Many airlines require your cast to be altered before you can fly or you may require a letter from the hospital. Seek advice before flying.

Further Advice & Instructions:

………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………

Pain:

Some pain is to be expected after an injury or surgery. This should be improved by having a cast on. Simple shop brought pain relief should also help with any pain. If you have increasing pain, unbearable pain or pain with severe increasing pins and needles please attend your nearest A&E department.

Sling:

You may be given a sling with your cast. The sling helps you keep your hand up especially when moving about, this reduces pain and swelling and helps with healing.

If your arm becomes uncomfortable in the sling take it out and rest your arm on a pillow.

When in bed or resting take the arm out of the sling and rest it on a pillow. Regularly take the arm out of the sling and move the joints not in the cast to avoid them getting stiff.
Pressure Ulcer prevention for patients with a cast:

What Is a pressure ulcer?
Pressure ulcers are a type of injury that causes a break in the skin under a cast. Pressure stops blood flowing to the skin and the skin breaks down. Only a small number of people get pressure ulcers from their cast.

The information below gives steps you can take to reduce the risk of developing an ulcer:
• Regularly move the rest of the arm with the plaster on.
• Ensure the top and bottom of the cast does not rub or leave red marks on the hand or arm.
• Keep well hydrated.

Immediately contact the Plaster Room or the Plastics Nurse/Doctor if you notice:
• Rubbing or blister-like pain or discomfort within the cast
• Something wet or sticky inside the plaster cast
• The plaster cast has developed a smell
• Marks appear on the outside of the cast that seems to be soaking through from the inside
• Areas of pain or heat from under the cast

General observations:

Symptoms
If you experience a temperature, any heat from under the cast, burning pain, smell, discharge or staining of the cast please telephone the Plastics Trauma Nurse at Stoke Mandeville Hospital on 01296 315000 bleep 774 or out of hours the Plastics Doctor bleep 524.

Please contact us if the cast becomes too tight, loose, rubs, becomes soft, cracks or is broken.

Adverse reaction
Following your plaster cast being fitted there is a small risk of a decrease in blood flow to your arm or the development of a blood clot. If you experience any of the following symptoms please attend the Accident & Emergency Department or a Minor Injuries & Illness Unit immediately:
• Sudden increase in pain in your arm or chest.
• Sudden onset of shortness of breath with no physical exertion.
• Your fingers or toes appear blue, white, swollen, painful, numb, cold or increasing pins and needles.