

SPICA CAST CARE

WHAT IS A SPICA CAST?

A hip spica cast holds the hip, pelvis, and thigh bones along with soft tissues and tendons in place. This helps to keep them from moving while they heal. Your child will not be able to walk or stand while in this type of cast. The reason for the cast will help decide which type of cast to use and how much of the main part of the body it will cover.

There are three types of casts:

- Single hip spica – Covers some part of the trunk and one leg to the foot or ankle
- Double hip spica – Covers some part of the trunk and both legs to the ankles
- One-and-a-half spica – Covers some part of the trunk and one leg to the ankle and the other leg to above the knee

BASIC CAST CARE

- Check the cast daily for cracks and changes.
- Keep the cast dry and clean.
- **Your child should be turned every 2-4 hours while awake.**
- Have your child wear loose clothing over the Spica cast.
- Have your child wear a bib or towel to cover the cast while eating.
- After turning, be sure the cast edges are not cutting into or pinching the skin.
- Your caregiver may have you "petal" the Spica cast. This means lining the edges of the cast with soft, smooth tape or moleskin to protect the skin. For each edge or opening:
 - Cut 4 inch strips of tape or moleskin.
 - Apply tape to outside of cast. Tuck into cast, and make sure to not stick on skin.
 - Continue this process by overlapping strips to make a sealed edge.

GOING TO THE BATHROOM

- An older child may use a bedpan or toilet to go to the bathroom.
- Wipe and dry the buttocks well.
- With girls, a cup placed over the labia will help guide the urine into the bedpan. Wipe front to back.
- Change the bedding or pants right away if they become wet or dirty (*soiled*).

- Change diapers more frequently to prevent cast from becoming wet. A soiled diaper is more likely to cause leakage and skin problems.

Diapering Young boys:

- 1) Cut hole in buttocks area of smaller sized diaper and pull penis through. Tuck diaper in front as usual.
- 2) Tuck additional smaller sized diaper in buttocks area for collecting feces.
- 3) Apply larger diaper over smaller diapers (and cast) to hold it all together.

Diapering Young Girls:

- 1) Tuck a small to medium sized diaper inside cast at all areas of groin and buttocks.
- 2) A sanitary pad can be added for more absorption.
- 3) Apply larger diaper over smaller diaper and cast to hold it all together.

If the cast gets soiled with urine and/or feces:

- Do not panic. Remove all soiled cotton by pulling it out with your fingers. Pull out cotton until it is fluffy and dry or there is no more cotton in the soiled area.
- Remove 'petal' pieces of tape and replace, to avoid moisture that may have gotten trapped.
- **DO NOT** replace soiled cotton you removed. The space created from this will not affect their healing.
- It is okay to place your child in front of a fan or use a hairdryer on cold setting should their skin still feel damp.
- The cast will have an odor after being soiled, but the cast will **NOT** be changed because of this.

DECORATING THE CAST

- Do not use lacquer or oil paints
- May use sharpie markers

CIRCULATION AND SKIN CARE

- Your child's toes should be pinkish and warm. Make sure your child can wiggle his or her toes just like before the cast. Make sure he or she can feel your touch.
- Check your child's skin every day in bright light. Look for reddened areas near the edges of the cast. Call Rady Childrens cast room at x4570 for further instructions if you find persistent redness or sores.
- Carefully give your child a sponge bath with warm water and mild soap as needed. **Do not wet the cast.**
- **Do not** use any lotions or powders on your child's skin near cast edges.
- **Do not** stick any objects under the cast.
- You may blow cool air into the cast with a hair dryer on the lowest setting for cooling and itch relief.

KEEPING YOUR CHILD COMFORTABLE AND SAFE

- Use pillows to support the legs. Place them under the legs so that the heel and foot is not in direct contact with the pillow.
- **Change your child's position every 2 to 4 hours.**

GETTING AROUND

- Plan for gentle activities, such as board games, reading, and video games.
- Pick your child up by supporting the cast, the leg area, and the upper body. Put one arm under the bottom of the cast and one arm under the child's opposite arm. **Do not** pick up your child by the armpits.
- You may use pillows to prop your child in a wagon or an adjustable stroller. Make sure to use the safety belt. Bean bag chairs are helpful.
- Your child should not stand or walk in the cast unless directed to do so by your provider.

WHEN TO CALL THE ORTHOPEDIC DEPARTMENT:

- Numbness, tingling, increasing pain, decreased sensation, or color changes in toes (pale, blue, red)
- Pain under the cast becomes severe and pain medications do not help
- Any redness, swelling, or sores around the cast edges that is not resolved with repositioning or massage
- Drainage through the cast or out of the end of the cast
- Cast feels too loose or too tight
- Cast becomes soft or breaks
- Foul smelling cast

CAST CARE QUESTIONS

- Rady Children's Hospital Cast Room: (858)-576-1700 x4570
- Escondido Cast Room: (858) 576-1700 x8371
- Rady Children's Hospital Outpatient Orthopedic Department: (858) 966-6789

ACTIVITIES IN A SPICA CAST

Being in a Spica cast can feel limiting and frustrating at times. It is important to try to help your child to continue to do some of the activities he/she enjoys so they can cope with it better. Here are some ideas on how to help your child have fun while in in a Spica.

- It is very important to keep your home routine predictable and as normal as possible. This will help your child feel more secure and relaxed. One way to do this is to keep a daily **schedule** or routine.
- Use a **bean bag** chair to allow your child to be in different positions comfortably.
- **Involve your child** in family activities in any way you can. If he feels left out, he may be more likely to be upset about being in the SPICA cast.
- **Get outside**, if possible. Use a **wheelchair or wagon** so your child can spend time in the sunshine and fresh air every day, weather permitting.
- Read books out loud. This can allow your child to relax and experience something different by using his imagination.
- Other “quiet” activities- blow bubbles, coloring, painting, action figures, watch a movie, read books, go for a walk outside
- Keep track of the days until the cast comes off. Use a calendar to cross off the days and have a celebration planned for “Cast Off” day. Younger children may enjoy making a paper chain when the cast is first put on. Each link of the chain represents one day. Each day your child can take off one link and throw it away. The last link represents the day the cast comes off. Hooray!!
- Use age-appropriate activities such as TV, movies, and/or use of computers, ipods/tablets.

Examples of How to Position your child in a Spica Cast

On Tummy to play:



Up in Wheelchair:

Position on each side:

