

Diabetes – Plaster or Fibreglass Casting of Foot Ulcers

This leaflet provides advice about the cast which is being used to treat foot ulceration or Charcot foot. The cast is made from layers of plaster of Paris or fibreglass bandage. When the cast is applied you will not be able to put any weight on it for 30 minutes until the cast has firmly set. After this you can walk on the cast. The less walking and standing you do in the cast the better. In some instances you may be given crutches and advised not to weight-bear whilst you are wearing the cast.

Why you have been prescribed a non-removable cast:

- If you have a foot ulcer, casting can reduce the pressure over the ulcer and help the foot ulcer to heal.
- If you have a Charcot foot, a cast is an effective way of supporting the foot and preventing ulceration and deformity.
- The cast may cover just your ankle or your ankle and knee.

Precautions when using a non-removable cast:

- The cast may rub and cause ulceration in the foot or leg. You may not feel this chaffing if the sensation in your leg and foot is reduced.
- Wearing a cast can alter the way you walk and your mobility. We do not know if wearing a cast affects your balance. Casts can cause problems with your clothing, sleep and day-to-day activities.
- You may need to be in a cast for several months, and have frequent changes and adjustments to your cast. You will have regular appointments with us.
- Depending on your employment contract, you may have to take time off work.
- You will not be able to drive a manual car while in a cast. In certain circumstances you may be able to drive an automatic car (only if the cast is on your left leg), but you need to check with your car insurance company.
- We do not recommend travelling abroad, whilst wearing a cast for a diabetic foot problem, and you would have to speak directly with your airline for advice if you are planning to fly. Remember to inform your travel insurance company about your foot problem before you travel.

Looking after your non-removable cast:

- Rest your leg as much as possible (foot higher than your hip). You should gently exercise the affected limb every couple of hours during the day; bend and straighten your knee, clenching muscles in calf and thigh to improve blood flow.
- Wear the sandal/slipper provided at all times when you are walking.
- Check the cast every day for signs of damage.
- Check the skin on both legs and feet for signs of cast rubbing. To prevent rubbing of your other leg use a large sock or pillow case to cover the cast.
- Do not remove the cast yourself.

- Do not get your cast wet. You may get a plastic cover to protect the cast and enable you to shower – ask your Podiatrist.
- Do not put talcum powder or any other substance down cast to make it smell nice.
- Do not poke anything down cast as this may damage the skin leading to infection.

Contact the Plaster Clinic or Multidisciplinary Diabetic Foot Team immediately if:

- You notice the cast has caused a rub or bleeding on any part of your leg or foot.
- You have pain or discomfort in your leg.
- Your cast becomes loose, tight, stained, wet, soft, cracked or starts to smell badly.
- You feel unwell, tired, hot, shivery with flu-like symptoms.
- There is anything about the cast that is worrying you.

Precaution

Being in a cast can increase the risk of developing a clot in the calf known as deep vein thrombosis. Very rarely these clots can detach and become lodged in the lungs. If you develop calf pain, chest pain or shortness of breath please attend your local Emergency department promptly or dial 111.

If the cast is troubling you outside the opening times below, please dial 111 or seek help via a local Accident and Emergency or Urgent Care Centre and contact the Multidisciplinary Diabetic Foot Team the next working day.

Contact details for help and advice

Plaster Clinic
<p>Cumberland Infirmary Newtown Rd, Carlisle, CA2 7HY. Telephone: 01228 523444 (main hospital) or 01228 814729 (direct line) open Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm</p> <p>West Cumberland Hospital Homewood Rd, Whitehaven CA28 8JG. Telephone: 01946 693181 (main hospital number) open Monday – Friday 9am – 4.30pm</p>
Multidisciplinary Diabetic Foot Clinic (MDFT)
<p>Clinics are provided at West Cumberland Hospital, Whitehaven and the Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle</p> <p>Postal address: Diabetes Centre, Carlisle Infirmary, Newtown Rd, Carlisle, CA2 7HY</p> <p>Telephone - 01946 68599 (answer service, monitored between the hours Monday – Friday 9am until 4pm)</p>
NHS Out of Hours Services please telephone 111
Accident & Emergency Department at Cumberland Infirmary or West Cumberland Hospital

Podiatry Contact Details

Community Podiatry Clinics	
Carlisle Locality - Telephone: 01228 608020	Podiatry Service, North Carlisle Medical Centre, Eden Street, Carlisle, CA3 9JZ
Eden Locality - Telephone: 01768 245628	Podiatry Service, Penrith Health Centre, Penrith, CA11 8HW.
Allerdale Locality - Telephone: 01900 705120	Podiatry Service, Workington Community Hospital, Park Lane, Workington, CA14 2RW.
Copeland Locality - Telephone: 01946 68635	Podiatry Service, Flatt Walks Health Centre, Castle Meadows, Whitehaven CA28 7QE

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Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust