

Serial casting

This leaflet explains what to expect when you bring your child in to the Plaster Room for serial casting to treat tiptoe walking.

What is serial casting?

Serial casting is a treatment for tiptoe walking that uses plaster casts to stretch the soft tissue (e.g. muscles in the calf) for an extended period of time. This treatment will be carried out in the plaster room and is done by applying a series of casts, usually fortnightly, while attempting to gradually improve your child's range of ankle movement. Your child may need serial casting for between 2-6 weeks. The number of weeks/casts necessary depends on the level of stretch required.

What to bring and what happens on the day

When attending for this appointment, please bring with you any toys, books or electronic devices for your child to use as a distraction during the appointment. Your child should wear or bring loose fitting trousers or shorts to allow for application of the casts. Prior to the appointment, please encourage your child to bath/wash the skin, as this will not be possible for two weeks after the cast is applied. Please do not bring other children to the appointments. On the day of the appointment, you will be shown to a bay, where a member of staff will explain the procedure and ask if you have any questions. Protective soft socks and pads will be applied to the child's leg(s) and then, while attempting the stretch, the soft cast will be applied from just below the knee to the toes and special shoes may be fitted to wear over the cast.

How to look after the cast

The cast must stay dry at all times. You can invest in a plastic cover or use a plastic bag to protect it from splashes. You may find an assisted wash more appropriate while your child is in the cast. Please speak to the Plaster Room staff if you have any queries.

Your child will be able to walk, play and go to school with the cast on; however, it may be advisable that they do not take part in PE sessions or contact sports. This is because activities can increase the chances of developing soreness under the cast.

If the skin underneath the cast becomes itchy, do not put anything down the cast to scratch the area. This can break the skin or the object can get stuck. As the cast is slightly flexible, you can also gently press on the cast over the itchy area for relief.

What are the risks of serial casting?

Although every attempt is made to reduce the risk of complications within the cast, your child may experience rubbing/soreness, most commonly around bony prominences such as the ankle or heel. If left untreated, this can develop into pressure sores or blisters. As the cast is holding the foot in an unfamiliar position, the foot may attempt to return to the 'tiptoe walking' position within the cast, which can cause this rubbing. If your child experiences any of the symptoms

listed in 'What to look out for', please contact the Plaster Room for advice.

As the foot is being casted in an unfamiliar position, your child can struggle with balancing and mobilising in the first few days after casting. This usually improves with time and practice; however, if you see no improvement, please contact the Plaster Room.

What to look out for

While the cast is on, your child should not be in any pain but may experience mild discomfort or a stretching sensation. Please regularly check your child for any of the symptoms below and contact the Plaster Room immediately if any arise. If outside of opening hours, please contact your nearest Emergency Department.

- Pain, numbness, tingling or pins and needles in the limb.
- Rubbing, burning pain at any bony prominences (eg heel, toes, bridge of foot).
- Redness or any other signs of rubbing around the edges of the cast.
- Swollen, cold or pins and needles in the toes.

Other information

If you are concerned or have any other questions, do ask the staff in the Fracture Clinic or Plaster Room, open Monday to Friday 8.15am to 5pm.

At other times please contact your GP or the Emergency Department (A&E).

Plaster Room: 0118 322 7040

Fracture Clinic: 0118 322 7553

Accident & Emergency Department: 0118 322 7022

Friends and Family Test

Before you leave hospital you will be given a card asking one question "Overall, how was your experience of our service?" Please spare a few moments of your time to give us your feedback.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Plaster Room, Orthopaedic Outpatients, October 2023

Next review due: October 2025