What to Expect When You Get a Cast at Seattle Children’s
A note for parents and caregivers:

This book is for children of all ages. It explains a common patient experience of getting a cast on and off at Seattle Children’s.

Because children have different reasons for needing a cast, some sections may not apply to your child. Some children can cope with a lot of information. Others become anxious with too much information. You know your child best: Choose which sections to share.

What you can do

We encourage you to be present and supportive of your child when they are getting their cast on and off. Ask your child and hospital staff how you can help.

You will receive information about how to care for your child’s cast at your appointment. Please talk with your child’s doctor about any restrictions in activities with the cast.

For questions or to schedule a consult with a Child Life specialist (includes medical play, coping strategies and/or a tour), please contact:

Seattle Children’s Child Life Specialists
206-987-2145
This is a book about getting a cast. Kids come to the hospital every day to have casts put on different parts of their bodies. There are many reasons for getting a cast.

This book will show you what it is like to get a cast on and off.

Why are you getting a cast?
When you come to the hospital to get your cast, you will first check in at the registration desk. You will get an ID bracelet that has your name and birthday on it.

When it’s your turn, a medical assistant (MA) will call your name in the waiting area. The MA will ask to look at your ID bracelet.

The MA might check your height and weight. Then they will take you to get your cast. Your parent or caregiver can come with you.
There are a few places in the hospital where kids get casts.

This is what a private room looks like. It is small and quiet. It has a bed or chair for you to sit on.

This is what the casting room looks like. It is a bigger room with six beds. You have your own bed or chair to sit on.

You may see other kids in this room who are getting casts, too. You might hear lots of people talking. This is where most kids get their casts.
A person called an ortho tech will put on your cast. A doctor also might be in the room with you.

The ortho tech will ask you to sit on the bed or lie down. Your parent can be right next to you.

You can choose to watch the cast go on. Or you can listen to music with headphones, play with your tablet or phone, or bring something else from home that will help you feel comfortable.

What are some things you could do while getting your cast on?
Your cast will go on in 4 parts.

1. The **sock** goes on first. It looks a little different than the socks you wear with shoes.

2. The **cotton wrap** wraps around the sock like a blanket. It is soft and white.

3. The **white casting material** is next. The ortho tech dips it into a bucket of water. When the material gets wet, it becomes sticky and warm. The ortho tech will wrap it around the cotton wrap to make the cast.
4. Then the white layer gets covered with a layer of **colored casting material**. You can choose a color!

What color will you choose?
After all of the parts are on, the cast is finished! Now you will need to let it dry for 5 to 10 minutes.

When it’s dry, the cast will be hard. It will no longer be sticky.

After it dries, you’re ready to go home. If you would like, ask friends and family to write a special message on your cast.
In a few days or weeks, you will come back to the hospital to get your cast changed or removed.

You might come to the same room where you got your cast. You might even see the same people.

You will be asked to sit or lie down on the bed while the ortho tech takes off your cast. The ortho tech will offer you a towel to keep the cast dust off your lap.

The ortho tech uses a special machine called a **cast remover**. It sounds like a really loud vacuum cleaner.

Click [here](#) to hear the cast remover.
The cast remover works by vibrating, or moving back and forth really fast, against the cast.

The tool will not touch your skin. You might feel a tickle as it moves through the cast.

Your job is to keep your body calm and very still. We will give you headphones to plug into your phone or tablet so you can listen to music or watch TV.
The ortho tech will hold the tool against your cast to cut both sides.

If you’d like, ask if you can touch the cast remover blade before your cast is taken off. What does it feel like?
Next, they will use pliers to pull apart the cast. You might hear a “pop” sound when the pieces separate.

The cotton wrap and sock will still be on your body. The ortho tech will cut them off with special scissors.
When your entire cast is off, your skin will be washed with warm, soapy water or baby wipes.

Your skin might look different where the cast was. It might be flaky and dry. It might even smell a little stinky.

All of this is OK. Now that your cast is off, your skin will heal soon.
Some kids may need an X-ray before or after getting their cast on or off.

An X-ray is a special kind of camera that takes pictures of your bones and other parts of your body.

The pictures help show the doctor what part may need a cast or how it has healed with the cast.

If you need an X-ray, you will go to the X-ray room. A person called an X-ray tech will take the pictures. Your parent or caregiver can come with you.

It only takes a few minutes to get an X-ray.

Ask to see the X-ray pictures when you are done!
When you get a cast, you may be asked if you feel any pain. Here are two possible ways to answer:

These faces show how much something can hurt. Point to the face that shows how much you hurt right now.

Or use numbers to say how it felt. 0 means it did not hurt and 10 means it hurt a lot.
Now that you know what to expect when getting a cast on or off, think about what you can do to stay relaxed, calm and still.

**Do you like to watch and learn?**

You can:

- Ask to hear about each step before it happens or as it happens.
- Ask the staff what you can do to help.
- Ask to touch some of the materials used for your cast.
Do you like to look away?

You can:

• Bring a small toy or book from home to look at.
• Look at something else in the room or close your eyes.
• Take slow, deep breaths to help your body relax.
• Have someone hold your hand.

Remember:
Your most important job is to hold very still.
My Cast Plan

You can use this plan to prepare for getting your cast on or off. Fill it out and bring it with you to your appointment.

While I get my cast on or off, I will:
- Play with a small toy
- Read a favorite book
- Hug my stuffed animal
- Play with my tablet or phone
- Listen to music with headphones
- Watch the cast go on or come off
-_____________________________________________________________________

I want to sit or lie down:
- By myself
- Close to ____________________________________________

I want my cast to be this color:
- Blue
- Purple
- Pink
- Green
- White

Things that will help me when getting my cast on or off:
-_____________________________________________________________________
-_____________________________________________________________________
-_____________________________________________________________________

My name: ____________________
Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child’s nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Seattle Children’s offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children’s will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handbook has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children’s. However, your child’s needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child’s healthcare provider.

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