

After a Cast (arm)

Your arm is out of a cast. Hooray! A cast was placed around your arm to prevent movement of the joints and muscles to allow the fractured bone and/or injured tissues to heal in a good position.

What to expect:

When the cast is removed, it is not unusual to experience some pain, swelling and stiffness of the joint for a few days and notice atrophy of the arm muscles for a few weeks.

There will also be dry scaly skin around the arm. Do not rub it; it will gradually fall off. Wash in warm soapy water and apply body lotion daily.



Rehabilitation:

An important part of the treatment after cast removal is early rehabilitation. It will encourage recovery and help prevent re-injury and/or chronic problems. Physiotherapy is the best way to improve the strength and flexibility of your arm and help you return to activity within a few weeks.

An exercise program is provided for you to begin rehabilitation.



Trauma

(514) 412-4400 extension 23310
2300 Tupper Avenue, C-831, Montreal, Quebec
H3H 1P3
www.thechildren.com/trauma

Begin with these exercises: 2x / day after removal of a cast.

1)



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- Bend elbow at 90 degrees and hold next to body with other hand.
- Hand open
- Turn palm up.
- Turn palm down.
- Repeat 20 times each movement.

2)



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- Forearm supported on a table with wrist over edge
- Hold forearm down with other hand.
- Lift and lower the hand slowly.
- Repeat 20 times each movement.

3)



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- Support forearm on a table with hand open.
- Hold forearm down with other hand.
- Slide hand side to side.
- Repeat 20 times each movement.

4)



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- Hold small towel or spongy ball in hand.
- Squeeze and hold 5 seconds.
- Open hand. Squeeze again.
- Repeat 15 times.

If you had an above elbow cast removed, do this exercise as well:

1)



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- Standing or sitting
- Shoulder straight, palm up
- Bend and straighten elbow slowly.
- Repeat 20 times.

If there is no appreciable improvement (i.e.: decreased pain and swelling, improved wrist and elbow motion) in two weeks, seek further medical attention.

As per the period recommended by your doctor:

- Do not lift heavy objects with the affected arm.
- No contact sports
- Swimming is encouraged but with no jumping or diving.
- Begin using affected arm for activities of daily living including eating and grooming.
- You must move elbow and wrist actively by yourself. No one should pull or push on any of the movements of your joints. Parents should guide and supervise younger children when they are doing their exercises.

Return to activity:

Follow the recommendations of your doctor.

You can return to activity when there is:

- Full range of motion of the wrist and elbow
- Good strength of the muscles around the wrist and elbow
- No pain or swelling noted with exercise
- Return to sports gradually.



L'Hôpital de Montréal pour enfants
The Montreal Children's Hospital

Centre universitaire de santé McGill
McGill University Health Centre



Trauma

Program

(514) 412-4400

extension 23310

2300 Tupper

Avenue. C-820.