

## What to Look Out For

- **Incorrectly fitted cast** - Your cast should not move against your skin but should not feel tight, put pressure on your skin or cause swelling of your fingers, thumb or toes. If you have any problems or are worried by your cast, get it checked by your fracture clinic. Tightness, increase of pain while in the cast or loosening of the cast may cause long-term complications.



Get immediate assistance from the fracture clinic or the emergency department if any of the following occurs:

- Increased swelling
- Pins and needles or numbness
- Inability to move fingers/toes
- Unusual colouring  
i.e. blue/purple colour or skin mottling
- Increased pain

## Prevent CRPS

500 mg of Vitamin C for 50 days following a fracture of the wrist or ankle, or a nerve surgery such as carpal/tarsal tunnel surgery, can reduce your chance of contracting Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) – a severe, persistent pain condition.

Find more information about

Complex Regional Pain Syndrome at:



admin@CRPSnetworkAustralia.org.au



www.instagram.com/crps\_network\_australia



www.facebook.com/CRPSnetworkAustralia

[www.CRPSnetworkAustralia.org.au](http://www.CRPSnetworkAustralia.org.au)

## DO YOU HAVE A FRACTURE OF THE WRIST OR ANKLE?



### Reduce Your Risk of Complications

Risks of complications after a fracture can be reduced by following the care instructions in this leaflet. Possible complications include, stiffness, reduced function, persistent pain and Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, a debilitating pain condition that can occur after an injury, involving nerves, muscles, skin and bones.

Following a fracture, your wrist or ankle may be immobilised in a plaster cast or a splint, usually for a period of 6 weeks. This helps to keep the bones stable and to ensure that they heal in a good position. The plaster or splint can also help to control your pain. In some cases, you may need to have an operation to ensure the best position of the bones and occasionally you may need pins and/or plates to hold the bones in place while it heals.

### Why Fracture Care is Important:

Following a fracture there are several complications that you can encounter, including;

- **Stiffness** - This is a relatively common short-term complication which could take months to resolve but does not normally affect your long-term function.
- **Reduced Function** – This is also a reasonably common short-term complication, but it rarely remains in the long-term.
- **Persistent Pain** – an uncommon long-term complication.
- **Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)** – a rare persistent pain condition that can occur after a fracture. The usual early symptoms of which are burning pain, discolouration of the skin and swelling. It commonly resolves with the aid of physiotherapy or occupational therapy, but it can develop into a long-term problem that requires the help of a pain management specialist team.

## How to Care for Your Fracture

### Control Your Pain

In order to be able to sleep well and keep the healthy parts of your limb moving it is important to keep your pain levels as low as possible. Seek medical assistance from your fracture clinic or GP if necessary.

### Reduce Swelling

Your arm and hand or leg and foot may swell because of your injury. This swelling can increase your pain and cause your joints to become stiff. Any stiffness may delay healing and affect your ability to perform normal functions of daily living.

You can reduce your swelling by;

- Keeping your fracture raised above the level of your heart as much as possible.
- Rest with your limb out straight and raised on several pillows while resting or watching tv.
- Every 15 minutes raise your hand above your head and open and close your fingers several times or raise your leg and wiggle your toes.



### Keep Your Limb Moving

To keep your uninjured joints healthy it is important that you keep them moving. This will also speed up your recovery time once the plaster or splint is removed.

### Make Sure Your Plaster is Comfortable

Your plaster should fit well and be comfortable. It should not stop you from making a fist or moving your toes.

### Use Your Hand Normally

Where possible use your hand for normal daily functions, such as dressing, doing up buttons/zips, brushing your hair and eating etc. Do not ignore your injured limb. This will help to prevent muscle weakness and abnormal pain.

### Take 500 mg of Vitamin C

Taking 500mg of vitamin C per day for a minimum of 50 days is known to help prevent the incidence of CRPS following a fracture

### Avoid Smoking

Nicotine reduces blood flow, which can delay healing

### Eat an Anti-Inflammatory Diet

Eat a healthy, anti-inflammatory diet consisting of fresh, unprocessed, whole foods. Avoid packaged, boxed, canned, and prepared food items which contain inflammatory preservatives and additives. Eat fresh fruits and vegetable with lots of colours and drink at least 2l of water per day. A poor diet is known to contribute to slow healing.