Care for Plastered Limbs

**Definition:** Plaster is a hard external device for immobilizing fractures. Plaster repairs fractures by applying uniform pressure to them and immobilizing them.

**Care for plastered limbs at home:**

- To prevent swelling, place the plastered parts of body over the body.
- To reduce limb pain, place ice packs on both sides of the plaster and use a painkiller prescribed by your doctor.
- Report persistent pain, swelling that is not relieved by lifting the limb and taking painkillers, change of color, temperature, and pressure, decreased ability to move, numbness or tingling in the fingers and toes, unpleasant odor, and plaster breakage.
- Do not use too much of the damaged limb.
- Relieve itchy skin with cold air of hair dryer. Scratching the skin causes sores and infections.
- Keep the plaster dry, but do not cover it with plastic or linoleum as they will moisturize the skin and plaster.
- Avoid excessive movement of the limb inside the plaster because it will cause the broken bone to heal late.
- To maintain muscle mass and strength and prevent muscle wasting, do muscle exercises (tightening and relaxing) several times a day for a few minutes.
- Cover the sharp and uneven edges with duct tape.
- In trunk plaster used in (femoral fractures in children), to prevent cracking and unevenness, it is better for the patient to lie on a firm mattress until it dries completely. Do not put pillows under the head and shoulders during drying because it puts pressure on the chest. To prevent contamination of the plaster with urine and feces, before each disposal, place a clean, dry plastic under the disposal area of plaster mold and turn the edges outward. The feeling of being trapped in a confined space causes the child anxiety, which can be reassured by the support of loved ones. The child may also experience slowing of gastrointestinal movement, nausea and vomiting, which should be reported to the physician.
- Avoid walking on wet ground. In walking, the weight of the body should not be applied to the affected limb while walking.
- It takes 15 to 20 minutes for the plaster to harden, but if it does not dry completely, it does not have the required strength. Complete drying takes 24 to 72 hours, during which time you should:

  Use the palm of the hand to lift and move the plaster so that the pressure of the fingers does not sink into it.

  There is no cover on the mold to dry faster, fan or heat lamps can be used to dry the area faster. Be careful not to place wet plaster on very hard surfaces or sharp edges.
While walking, the hand plaster can be hung with a bandage or cloth from the neck, but it should not put too much pressure on the nerves of the neck and the knot of the cloth should not be tied on the neck vertebrae.

Care after removing the plaster:

- The skin under the plaster is usually dry and has many scales. Wash and dry the skin with mild soap and warm water, then moisturize the skin with a softening and moisturizing cream.
- Do not scratch the skin.
- To control the swelling and return to normal, place the limb above body level.
- Swelling of the limb after opening the plaster is common, which can be improved by placing the limb higher and using an elastic bandage or varicose socks.
- Resume movements and physical activities gradually.

If you have any questions or ambiguities, call the following number:

023-33437824, Surgery ward of Kosar Hospital