



Scoliosis Casting

What is scoliosis casting?

Casts can be used as a treatment for scoliosis when curve progression cannot be controlled with a brace.

- The cast works like a brace to prevent the curve from getting larger when children are young and growing rapidly. Unlike a brace, a cast is not removable.
- As with a brace, when the cast is removed, the curve will still be present.
- The goal is to stop the curve from getting larger.



Scan to watch
Casting for Scoliosis

How is the cast put on?

Your child will be admitted on the morning of each cast application. Your child will be given general anesthesia and be asleep in the casting room before the doctor applies the cast. Gentle traction is used to correct the scoliosis curve as much as possible. The doctor applies a T-shirt liner and soft padding to protect the skin before the cast is applied. The cast will have holes (or “windows”) to allow the stomach to expand for eating and to allow plenty of room for breathing.

What happens after the cast is put on?

Your child will be able to go home either the same day the cast is applied or the day after. The cast may impact your child’s balance and walking. It is important to watch your child closely to prevent injuries from falls. Your child will adjust to the cast in a few days. Because of your child’s rapid growth, the cast will have to be changed every two to three months for up to one year. Your child will be bathed in the casting room once the old cast is removed and before the new cast is placed. Your nurse coordinator will schedule these dates.

How will my child bathe with the cast?

The cast **must stay dry**. If your child wears diapers, you will have to tuck the diaper under the cast at the hips. Your child will not be able to take a regular bath or shower while wearing a scoliosis cast. You will have to sponge bathe your child during this time. **Water will ruin the cast and can cause wounds to your child’s skin under the cast.**

What are other things to know about caring for the cast?

- Keep the cast as clean and dry as possible at all times to prevent skin breakdown and damage to the cast.
- Give your child a sponge bath daily and wash all areas of skin not under the cast. **Never** give a bath or shower in the cast.
- If itching is a problem, you may use a hair dryer on cool setting to blow into the cast. You can also use distractions, such as games, music, reading, video games or counting to distract your child.



- Never put anything in the cast to scratch the skin, as this can cause a sore or infection. You can pull the T-shirt liner up and down to relieve itching.
- **Never** use powder inside the cast, as it may clump and irritate the skin. Do not use oil or lotion under or around the edges of the cast.
- **Never** permit a child around a pool with a cast on or allow him/her to ride in a boat.
- Do not allow your child to play in sand or dirt.
- It is OK to draw on your child's cast or put stickers on it. Be creative. Have fun with the cast.
- You will be given a cast care book before you go home. The nurse will give you further instructions and waterproof tape and moleskin for cast edges to use at home as needed.



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Change a Mehta Cast T-shirt*



Over the Shoulder Scoliosis Cast



Under the Shoulder Scoliosis Cast

If your child has trouble breathing, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Room.

Call Scottish Rite if:

- the cast is too tight.
- your child has decreased movement or sensation (tingling) in arms or legs.
- you notice a foul odor (beyond body odor). This can indicate a wound under the cast.
- you notice the cast position has changed
- you notice skin breakdown.
- the cast cracks or breaks.
- the cast is causing pain.
- an object (such as a toy, rocks, fork, etc.) gets into the cast and cannot be removed. This can cause a pressure wound under the cast.

Call your clinic nurse with any questions: Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
After-hours or on the weekends, call the Inpatient Unit: 214-559-7780

This material is for educational use.

Discuss any questions and concerns with your health care provider.

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