

Splinting for patients with neurological injury

Information for patients from Occupational Therapy

- How to put a splint on: _____

- How to take a splint off: _____

- Date splint applied/made: _____
- Next review of splint: _____
- Contact person: _____
- Contact number: _____

What is a splint?

A splint is a device used to help to stretch muscles which have become tight. They are made specially to fit you and may need to be adjusted over time by your therapist to increase the stretch.

In this leaflet the term splint will be used to refer to fibreglass casts, thermoplastic, and prefabricated splints.



A hand/wrist splint



Why do I need a splint?

- The splint keeps your limb/joints and muscles in the best position to help the management of your limb (arm or leg).
- The splint might also be used to help you when carrying out certain everyday activities such as gardening or shopping.

How do I look after my splint?

- Keep your splint away from direct heat, such as radiators and open fires, at all times.
- Spot clean your splint with warm water and a mild detergent (like washing up liquid), as needed.
- Other than spot cleaning, **do not get your splint wet** – it is not waterproof and will fall apart.

How long should I wear my splint for?

It may be necessary to wear your splint for several hours a day to keep your limb in the best position to heal, or for when you are doing certain physical everyday activities such as gardening or cooking. **It is very important to follow this guidance to get the most out of your splint.**

If you have any questions or concerns about your splint, please speak to your occupational therapist or physiotherapist, otherwise follow your wearing programme, as outlined on the front page of this leaflet.

Following this programme will make sure your muscles receive an adequate stretch.

What possible problems might I experience with my splint?

Check your splinted arm or leg every hour for the first few days, and regularly after this period for any of the following problems.

Problem	Possible cause	What I should do?
Continued skin irritation or red areas around your splint	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Badly fitted splint• Poor sensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove your splint• Contact your therapist if you cannot get your splint to fit correctly
Swelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Splint is fastened too tightly• Poor positioning of your limb (arm or leg)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loosen the straps• Review the instructions on how to apply your splint• Contact your therapist if you cannot get your splint to fit correctly
Pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Splint or straps have been applied wrong	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loosen the straps• Review your splint wearing programme (see front page)• Contact your therapist if you cannot get your splint to fit correctly

If any of the above problems occur, and do not improve after you have made the suggested adjustments, please remove your splint immediately and contact your therapist in the hospital or community, for advice. If you are on the ward, then please speak to one of the nurses.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation