

After the Injury...
What you need to know
after you leave the hospital

Discharge Information for Trauma Patients

Trauma Program

McGill University Health Centre



Centre universitaire de santé McGill
McGill University Health Centre

HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF MY CAST ?

Keep your cast dry – when showering, cover the cast with a plastic bag. If your cast gets wet, dry it with a hair dryer on low cold air.

The broken limb should be raised above the heart on pillows or cushions as much as possible during the first few days to prevent swelling and pain.

Put ice over the cast for 30 minutes a few times a day to prevent swelling and pain. Be careful not to wet the cast – put the ice in a plastic bag wrapped in a cloth.

Move the joints above and below your cast often to keep your muscles strong and joints flexible.

Avoid

- * Pulling out the padding from your cast
- * Putting anything inside your cast
- * Putting pressure on your cast for the first 48 hours, to make sure the shape does not change
- * Putting weight on your broken limb or walk on your cast until the doctor permits you to do so
- * Trimming or cut the edges off the cast

Come back to the Emergency Department if :

- * Severe pain or new pain occurs even after taking your pain medicine
- * Your toes/fingers swell or change color to blue or gray or become pale and do not get better after elevating the cast above the heart
- * You feel burning, numbness or tingling
- * Your cast cracks or becomes loose
- * You get a fever above 38.3°C or 101.2°F

Note: If you go home with a referral to an Orthopedic Surgeon (bone doctor) expect a call from the clinic within 2 business days and to be given an appointment within 10 business days of the ED visit. If no call is received within 7 business days after being discharged from the hospital, you should call the clinic 514-934-1934 ext. 48041.

HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF MY STITCHES AND/OR ABRASIONS ?

STITCHES are used to fix a cut or a wound.

- After the first 24-48 hours, take off the original bandage. If the bandage is stuck to your cut, soak the bandage with running water until it becomes loose.
- Gently wash the cut with soap and water. Clean it twice a day.
- Keep the cut clean and dry. Do not soak it in water (swim, wash dishes, or take a bath) until the stitches are taken out.

Call your doctor or CLSC right away if you notice :

- * Swelling
- * Red streaking around the cut
- * More pain even after taking your pain medication
- * Fever above 38.3°C or 101.2°F
- * Pus draining from the wound
- * Separation of the cut

ABRASIONS are breaks in the skin that take off the top layers of skin.

- Clean abrasions with soap and water 2-3 times a day.
- Apply a dry dressing for the first 2-3 days.
- Keep the abrasions clean and dry to help prevent infection.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR PAIN ?

Some pain after an injury is normal, but it should be controlled by the pain medicine prescribed to you by the doctor.

Do NOT wait until your pain gets very bad before taking your pain medicine – if you wait too long the medicine will not work as well.

You might have side effects from the medicine ask your pharmacist for details.

Call your doctor or Trauma Liaison Nurse if you have lots of pain, even when taking the medicine prescribed to you.

I HAD A HEAD INJURY —WHAT SHOULD I WATCH OUT FOR ?

In the first week after your head injury: If you live alone, ask somebody to stay with you during the first 72 hours. Rest; restart your daily activities gradually.

Avoid

- * Drinking alcohol
- * Using illicit drugs
- * Intense physical activity
- * Driving unless your doctor permits you

Come back to the Emergency Department

if you have any of these in the first 24-48 hours :

- * More drowsiness (trouble waking up)
- * Severe persistent headaches, not relieved by the pain medicine your doctor prescribed
- * If you vomit more than 3 times in the first 24-48 hours
- * Seizures (convulsions) or agitation
- * Trouble seeing (blurred vision and/or double vision)
- * Problems speaking, walking, or using an arm or a leg
- * Numbness or tingling anywhere

If you have been diagnosed with a head injury, YOU MUST call the Trauma Liaison Nurse 3-5 days after you are discharged from the hospital at 514-934-8420 and/or TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury Program) at 514-934-1934 ext. 4 4150 or 4 2048 for an important follow-up.

VIOLENCE / ABUSE

If you have been hit, kicked, slapped or hurt in any other way by somebody close to you, you can speak to your doctor or nurse about it, or you can call S.O.S. Violence Conjugale for help anytime during the day or night at 1-800-363-9010. The service is anonymous, confidential and free.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

CSST If your injury happened while you were at work, you might be able to get compensation from the Commission de la Santé et de la Sécurité du Travail (CSST). Ask the Doctor in the Emergency Department to fill-out the "Attestation médicale". For more information call the CSST at: (514) 906-3000 or visit: <http://www.csst.qc.ca/>

SAAQ If your injury was because of a car crash, you might be able to get compensation from the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec. To initiate a claim with SAAQ contact the MGH Trauma Liaison Nurse at (514) 934-8420. Or contact the SAAQ directly at 1-888-810-2525, or visit <http://www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca/>

IVAC If your injury was the result of violence or a crime against you, you might be able to get compensation from the Indemnisation des victimes d'actes criminels. For more information, contact (514) 906-3019, or visit <http://www.ivac.qc.ca/>

If you have any concerns related to your injury, call the Montreal General Hospital's Trauma Liaison Nurse at (514) 934-8420 or Trauma Clinic Nurse (514) 934-1934 ext. 44319.

This brochure was developed by Josée Maurice BScInf and Rubria Marines-Price BSN under direct supervision of the Emergency Trauma Nursing Committee, and funded by the Trauma Program, TBI program and Patient Education Committee of the Montreal General Hospital, McGill University Health Center.

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PRESCRIPTION FOR REMOVAL OF STITCHES OR STAPLES

Please remove stitches/staples on _____ (date)

MD signature _____

Permit # _____

Work/School excuse given CLSC was contacted



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IMPORTANT : PLEASE READ

Information provided in this pamphlet is for educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice or instruction of a professional healthcare practitioner, or to substitute medical care. Contact a qualified healthcare practitioner if you have any questions concerning your care.