

## Clubfoot Casting Homegoing Instructions for Patient Care

*Orthopaedic Hospital Outpatient Medical Center  
Department of Nursing*

Your child's foot is being placed in a cast to correct the turning in of his/her foot and to prevent future deformity.



Treatment consists of gentle massage and manipulation of the clubfoot to stretch the soft tissues. A cast is then applied to maintain this correction. After the foot has been in this position for seven days, the muscles and ligaments will stretch enough to make further corrections possible. Each week the cast is removed and the same process of gentle massage and manipulation is repeated for approximately six weeks until your doctor feels adequate correction has been achieved.

To help correct the deformity, the Achilles tendon (or heelcord) needs to be released in about 80% of babies before the last cast is applied. This is called a **tenotomy**. This is done as an outpatient procedure at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center. The procedure is performed with a very thin scalpel through a tiny incision. The tendon heals and reattaches within two to three weeks.



### After the cast application:

The first 24 hours after the cast is applied, your baby may be restless, but he/she should be comfortable after a day or two. Please do the following:

1. Check the circulation in the foot every hour for the first 12 hours after the cast is applied. This is done by gently squeezing the toes and watching for the return of blood flow. The toes will turn white when you squeeze and then quickly return to pink if the blood flow to the toes is good. This is called blanching. If the toes are dark and cold and do not blanch (white to pink), the cast may be too tight. If this occurs, please contact the Clinic at the Orthopaedic Hospital Outpatient Medical Center. If it's after hours, take the cast off and reevaluate the toes. If normal circulation returns, please call the Clinic to schedule a follow-up visit. If after removing the cast, you are not sure about the color of the toes, please take the child to the Orthopaedic Medical Center Urgent Care, or to a local emergency room.
2. The tips of the toes should be exposed. If you cannot see the toes, it may mean the cast has slipped and correct position of the foot is not being maintained. Call the Clinic at the Orthopaedic Hospital Outpatient Medical Center to make them aware of this.



3. Keep the cast clean and dry. The cast may be wiped clean with a slightly dampened cloth if it becomes soiled.
4. Whenever your baby is on his/her back, place a pillow under the cast to elevate the leg so that the heel extends just beyond the pillow. This prevents pressure on the heel, which could cause a sore.
5. Use disposable diapers and change the baby often to prevent cast soiling. **Apply the diaper above the top of the cast** to prevent urine/stool from getting inside the cast.

## Notify your doctor or the clinic nurse if you notice any of the following:

- Any drainage on the cast.
- Any foul smelling odors coming from inside the cast.
- If the skin at the edges of the cast becomes very red, sore, or irritated.
- If your child runs a fever of 38 degrees C/101.3°F or higher without an explainable reason, such as a cold or ear infection.



Following the removal of the last cast, and in order to prevent relapse, the baby will be fit with a brace. The brace will need to be worn 23 hours a day, for two to three months, and thereafter, at nighttime for two to four years. The first and second nights of wearing the brace the baby may be uncomfortable, but it is important that the brace not be removed. After the second night, the baby will adapt to the brace. Relapses will occur if the brace is not worn as prescribed.

When the brace is removed, ordinary shoes can be worn. Yearly visits will be scheduled for the next three to four years to check for possible relapses.

## TO REACH THE ORTHOPAEDIC CLUBFOOT CLINIC

**Please call the Clubfoot Clinic nurse, Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., at (213) 742-8365.**

**After hours or on weekends, please call the main number for the Orthopaedic Hospital Outpatient Medical Center at (213) 742-1000, and have the operator page an Orthopaedic Resident.**