

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY AFTERCARE

The kind of cast your child or youth needs after surgery may prevent standing or walking. Your child or youth will need help with almost everything: moving, bathing and getting dressed. It's important to think ahead of time about how you will care for your child after getting home from the hospital.

The help and equipment your child or youth will need depends on the type of cast they receive, their size and whether they will be able to put weight on the cast.

This guide covers information on caring for children and youth with three types of casts: A-frame casts, double below the knee casts and hip spica casts.

Your pre-surgery checklist

- Carefully read and follow the instructions in CHEO's *Preparing for surgery* booklet.
- Together with your surgeon or therapist in the community, make a list of equipment your child will need after surgery.
- Get quotes from vendors for rental equipment. You should ask the vendor about setup and delivery costs.
- Contact your insurance provider (if applicable) to find out what equipment is covered and what documentation must be provided.
- Reserve the equipment and arrange for pickup closer to the time your child will be discharged. This allows you to make any adjustments to the rental equipment, as sometimes needs change after surgery.
- Make travel arrangements to get your child home after surgery. You might need the help of a second adult.



A-frame cast



Hip spica cast

Transportation

Children and youth may not fit into their current seat belt, car seat or booster seat with their cast. You may need a special seat or restraint device for your child or youth. You can rent these from a vendor (see CHEO's vendor list and motion specialties pamphlet).

Sometimes, older, taller or heavier children and youth cannot fit into a regular vehicle with their cast. In these cases, transport options include a wheelchair accessible taxi, Para-transpo, or a non-urgent land ambulance. If one of these options is required or preferred, the cost is assumed by the family.

You may require transport tie downs for your wheelchair if you have rented a one. Ask your vendor about using your wheelchair in adapted transport. Tie downs may be available from your vendor.

Wheelchair accessible taxis are available only within the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau. This is suitable for older children or youth who are able to sit upright in their wheelchairs. Please contact a taxi company in advance for details and rates.

Paratranspo (Ottawa) and Paratransit (Gatineau)

This is another option for children and youth who are able to sit upright in their wheelchairs. To use these services, you must apply first. There is no cost to apply. Download the application from www.octranspo.ca (Ontario) or www.sto.ca (Québec). Your child's surgeon, family doctor or therapist will need to complete one section of the application form. Apply at least six weeks before the surgery as it can take some time for the application to be processed and approved. The cost for using this service is the same as a regular bus fare and there is no charge for the accompanying person.



Land ambulance

This is the best option for children and youth within the Ottawa area with A-frame and hip spica casts. It's also an option for children with bilateral casts, if they can't be lifted safely into a car or van, or if other transport is not suitable or available.

Private land ambulances are covered by many private health insurance plans. Please check your plan first to see what will be covered and what documentation you'll need to provide to get reimbursed. They can be pre-booked for return visits to CHEO for clinic appointments. Please see vendor list so you can contact companies for information about rates.

Non-urgent land ambulances can also be provided by Ontario's Ministry of Health. Most of the cost is covered by OHIP, but you will be billed for a 'co-payment' (currently \$45 for each trip). You can arrange this while your child or youth is in hospital. Please let your nurse or nurse practitioner know if you'll need this service. While in hospital, we'll give you information on how to book return visits to CHEO for clinic appointments by non-urgent land ambulance.

Vehicle restraints

Remember! You are responsible for making sure that the car seats are properly installed and meet Ministry of Transportation guidelines.

Hip spica car seat

These are special car seats for infants and toddlers in hip spica and A-frame casts. They support babies from 5-33 pounds (2.3-15kg) in a rear facing position. They support children 34-65 pounds (15.5-29kg) and a maximum height of 49 inches (1.2 metres) in a forward facing position.

E-Z On vest

These are a harness system to secure older children and youth (age 2-12) in hip spica casts when they can't sit in a car. They come in a variety of sizes depending on age and weight. With this vest, children and youth lie down across the back seat of a car or van, with the harness on them and attached to the vehicle's restraint system. The back seat must be long enough for your child or youth to lie flat, so you'll need to measure ahead of time.

Getting in and around your home

How easy is it to get into your home? Are there stairs to the entrance? Can you carry your child or will you need help? Can you get a wheelchair into your home? Is your living space on one or more levels? Is there a bathroom on the main level? Is the bathroom door wide enough for a wheelchair to get through?



Tips:

- Arrange to have help to carry your child into your home.
- Use a more accessible entrance, if there is one.
- Rent a ramp from a mobility equipment vendor if you plan to use a wheelchair to enter your home
- Measure the bathroom door and overall width of the wheelchair (including wheels) to make sure a wheelchair can fit through. If the door is too narrow, you may need to rent a commode chair, urinal or bedpan.
- Move your child or youth out of a bunk bed while they have their cast.
- Ask your surgeon or nurse practitioner about a home occupational therapy assessment at least two weeks before surgery.
- Get recommendations for home set up from an occupational therapist if you are working with one.

Idea:

Some families set a bed up on the main level of their home for the first week after coming home from the hospital. Others have their child stay on the main level during the day, but sleep upstairs in their own room at night. This means only one trip up and down the stairs each day.

Equipment/supplies you might need

You will be able to rent the equipment you need (you will have to buy bedpans or urinals). Usually, the equipment is needed for 1-3 months. Check the vendor list for suppliers. Ask your occupational therapist for guidance, if your child or youth is already working with one.

Wheelchair

Children and youth will need a wheelchair after surgery if they are too tall or heavy to be carried or if they can't put full weight on their legs. Wagons or strollers can often be adapted so that babies and toddlers can be safely moved around, especially outside.

If your child has double leg casts, you will need to measure them yourself and provide the information to your vendor. Children in A-frame and hip spica casts will be measured by CHEO staff after surgery.

Crutches or walkers

Children older than 6 can use these if they are able to put weight on at least one leg. During your child or youth's stay at CHEO, a member of our health-care team will teach your child or youth how to safely use their crutches or a walker during the hospital stay.

Commode chair

A commode chair is a portable toilet with arm rests. The seat has an opening in it. The commode can be wheeled into the bathroom and placed right over the toilet. You can also slip a bedpan under the seat. Commode chairs are helpful for children and youth who can bend at the waist or be easily lifted/transferred to the seat.

Bedpan or slipper pan

These can be slipped under the hips so a child or youth can pass urine or have a bowel movement without moving from bed. Bedpans are the best option for children and youth in hip spica casts who cannot bend at the waist. Usually, you will need to buy these. Slipper pans are a thinner kind of bedpan.

Urinal

These plastic bottles work well for children who "just need to pee". You will need to buy one of these if your child or youth needs it.

Over bed table

These tables are a handy surface for anyone in a bed or wheelchair. They can be used for eating, playing or school work. You can roll it away when it's not needed.

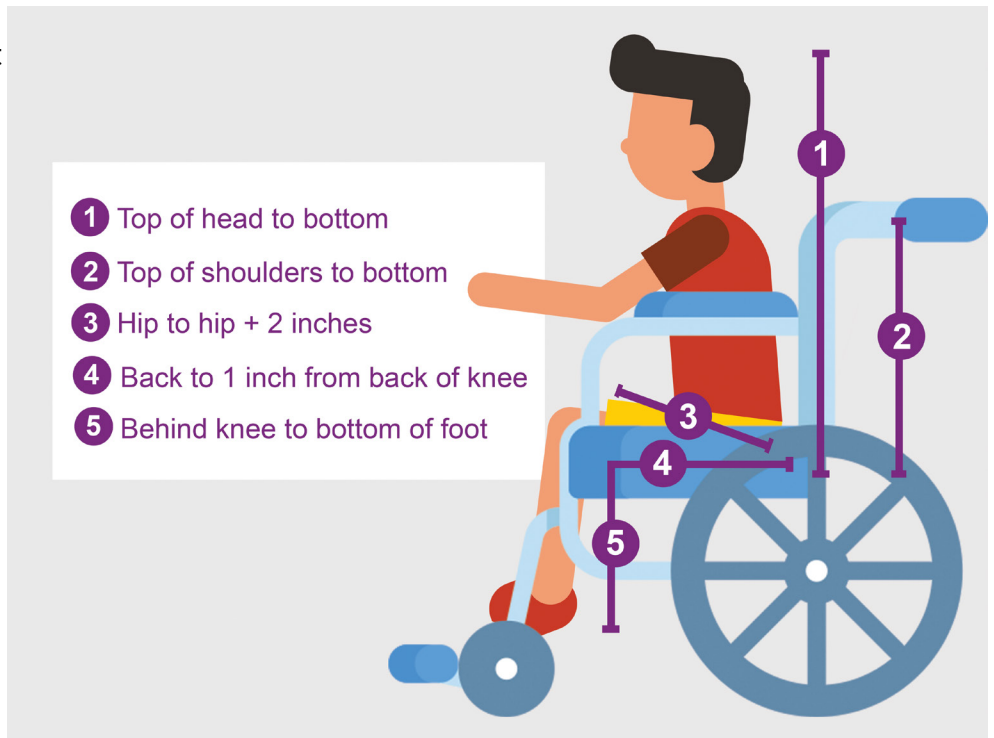
Hospital beds

If your child or youth is heavier or has complex needs, consider renting a hospital bed. They allow you to easily adjust the height or raise the head or foot of the bed. Although they take up more room than a regular bed, they make it easier to care for your child and youth without straining your back. You will need to make sure that a hospital bed will fit on the main level of your home before inquiring about renting one.

Portable lift and transfer boards

These lifts help to transfer children and youth from bed to wheelchair and back. They are most useful for

How to measure your child or youth for a wheelchair



taller, heavier children and youth with large casts or complex needs. Transfer boards help older children and youth with bilateral leg casts transfer themselves from their wheelchair to bed.

Other handy tips:

- Beanbag chairs make it easy to position children and are close to the ground for playing.
- Reclining chairs are very comfortable and have several positions. Note: the cast can damage the fabric, especially leather, so cover them with a large blanket before use.
- Hair can be washed using dry shampoo, a shampoo pool can be purchased online or you may wish to order no rinse shower caps to use while your child is in the cast and cannot shower/bathe.
- Pillows, towels or blankets can be used to help position your child or youth comfortably.



Managing equipment costs

Parents or guardians are responsible for obtaining and paying for short term rentals of hospital equipment. You may be able to borrow equipment from family or friends if it's in good condition and the right size for your child. Private health insurance benefits may also cover the cost of equipment rentals and transportation, so check with your insurance provider ahead of time. You'll need to find out what is covered and what documentation is needed to have coverage approved (for example, prescriptions, letters from doctor/nurse practitioner or special insurance forms). Some insurance companies must pre-approve rental costs before providing coverage.

If you live in Québec, your Centre locaux de services communautaires (CLSC) may be able to loan the equipment you'll need. Contact your local CLSC for more information.

If your family receives medical or social assistance like Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD), Régie des rentes (QC), Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), you may be able to get some financial help to cover the cost of renting equipment. Please check with your client service worker.

Supervising and supporting your child or youth at home

Before you leave the hospital, CHEO nurses and other team members will teach you about other aspects of your child's care at home.

While in the cast(s), your child or youth should never be left alone for any length of time. Make sure a responsible adult is always with your child. Your child or youth will need to be repositioned often, and will need help with things like bathing, going to the bathroom or eating. Connect with family and friends who may be able to help if you need to go out.

Bathing

The cast cannot get wet so your child or youth will not be able to take a regular bath or shower. They will require a bed or sponge bath.

Diapers

If your child is in diapers, they will continue to wear the same size of diaper while in the cast. You should

try your best to keep hip spica casts dry and free from urine or stool by doing a layered diaper technique. You will be taught this method in hospital and know which sizes of diapers will work for your child's cast.

School or daycare

Ask your surgeon how long your child should stay home from school or daycare after discharge from CHEO. Schools should provide an at-home tutor if your child will need to stay at home for the entire recovery period. Each school board has its own policy so you will need to call the school principal to make arrangements. If your child or youth will be going back to school or daycare, make sure staff can handle helping them with going to the bathroom, eating, and getting around.

Safety

You should make a plan on how you will get your child or youth out of your home in an emergency (for example, if there is a fire). Some families always keep a large blanket within reach. In an emergency, you can place the blanket under your older child or youth on the floor, and use the blanket to drag them to safety.

Contact information

Orthopedic clinic nurse (for general inquiries)

(613)-737-7600 ext. 2341

Monday to Friday, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm



Orthopedic nurse practitioner (for inquiries related to your child's orthopedic condition and post-operative care)

(613) 737-7600 extension 3556

Monday to Friday, 8:00 am- 4:00 pm

Orthopedic resident on call (for urgent concerns regarding your child's orthopedic condition)

(613) 737-7600 x 0 Ask to speak with the orthopedic resident on call.

After hours and weekends

Plaster and cast clinic "Body Shop" (for any cast-related questions)

613-737-7600 ext. 2405

Monday-Friday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Community discharge team (transportation arrangement or discharge equipment rentals)

613-737-7600 x2365

Monday-Friday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm



Need more information?

[Cheo.on.ca](http://cheo.on.ca) is the best place to find information on CHEO's programs and services and learn about a variety of health topics for children and youth. Visit our online resource section to access CHEO-recommended websites, books, apps, videos and more!