

A Patients Guide to Splinting



Information Guide about the splinting service at NRH

What is a splint?

A splint is made from plastic or cast material held in place by a bandage, cap or straps. They are made by both Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists. Each splint is custom made in the Splinting Department at NRH to suit your individual need.

What do splints do?

Splints are made to fit your arm or leg to keep your joints and muscles in a good position. Splints are used for different reasons depending on your needs, for example:

- To support a joint or muscle
- To gently correct joint position
- To keep the arm or leg in a good position and improve its use
- To prevent deformities
- To manage swelling in your arm or leg
- To reduce tightness and pain

How long do I wear my splint for?

The Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist will tell you how long you should wear your splint for. When you first get your splint you will wear it for a shorter period of time and gradually build up the time. It is best that you or your family learn:

- how to stretch your arm or leg before putting on the splint
- how to put them on and take them off correctly
- how to care for your splint
- how to keep to the wearing plan - how often, and for how long.

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What are the different types of splint?

Splints can be made for any part of your body but the types most commonly made in the NRH are:

- Hand splints
- Wrist splints
- Elbow splints
- Knee splints
- Ankle splints

For people who have difficulty using their hands, other types of splints can be used to help you to carry out everyday activities. Examples of these splints are:

- Phone splints (to help you hold a phone without using your fingers)
- Typing splints (to allow you to type or press buttons)
- Feeding splints (to support your wrist when eating)
- Writing splints (to allow you to hold a pen if your fingers can't)

Contact the Splinting Department if you notice:

- Marks on the skin that last for longer than 40 minutes after taking the splint off - these are most likely to occur at the top or the bottom of the splint. Check that the joint is not bending in the splint.
- Swelling
- Severe pain
- Numbness
- Change of skin colour at the end of your arm or leg

If you have any further questions or concerns about your splint ask your Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist.