

# Child Life Teaching Sheet: Cast Removal

The goal of Child Life is to promote positive experiences for children and their families in the health care setting. This teaching sheet is designed to introduce the steps of a cast removal at American Family Children's Hospital.

## Why is my cast being taken off?

Your cast has been keeping your bones and part of your body (like your arm or leg) safe and still so it has time to heal (or get better). When your bones have healed it's time for the cast to come off. Since your body part has been hiding under the cast for a while, it may look different when it comes out of the cast. It may look smaller or a lighter color, but once you can move it again, it will become stronger.

## What will I see and feel?



### Cast Saw

To take your cast off, a machine that sounds like a vacuum will be used. If you do not like the sound, you can ask for headphones so you don't hear it. The machine is used to cut only the hard, colorful part of your cast. It will not touch your skin. You may feel a vibration or a tickle as it makes two lines down your cast. You can ask the person helping you to see, feel, and hear the machine before it is used on your cast.



### Cast Splitter

A cast splitter will be used to spread apart the hard, colorful part of your cast. This tool will only touch the outside part of your cast, not your skin. You will be able to see the soft, white cotton underneath your cast.



### Scissors

These special scissors are not like the scissors you use at home or school, they are used to cut the soft, white cotton underneath your cast. The cotton is wrapped around your skin to keep your body part comfy inside the cast. The scissors can't cut your skin but might feel a little cold when they touch you.



### What's Next?

After your cast comes off you might get some [x-ray](#) pictures, a new cast, or a splint. A splint is like a soft cast and can be taken on and off. It helps to keep your body part safe while it gets stronger.

### Practice Ideas for Home

Sit in your favorite chair and have someone time you for three minutes to see if you can stay still. While you are sitting, try to think of a place that makes you happy or practice taking deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth like you are blowing out birthday candles.

### Caregivers Should Ask About



**Comfort Positioning:** Ways you can hold your child to reduce stress and promote the caregiver-child connection.

**Distraction:** You can use books, toys, or any other comfort item to take your child's attention away from the cast removal. Children take cues from their caregivers, so it is helpful to remain calm.

**Pain Control and Anxiety:** Ask your nurse about medications prior to the cast removal appointment. Deep breathing and a calm, non-crowded room help in relaxing a nervous child.

For additional ideas or support during a cast removal, please call Child Life at (608) 890-7888.