

# Your thermoplastic splint

Information and advice for patients

## *Physiotherapy*

### **What is a thermoplastic splint?**

A thermoplastic splint is a plastic splint that has been moulded specifically for you to wear on your hand or wrist.

### **What are the benefits of using a thermoplastic splint?**

The benefit of the splint is that it can help to position your lower arm in the best position to ensure your muscles and joints don't become increasingly tight.

### **What are the risks of using a thermoplastic splint?**

If you wear the splint too much there is a chance your skin could become damaged from the splint rubbing it or putting too much pressure on it.

### **What are the risks of not using the splint?**

If you do not wear your splint for the correct amount of time, you could lose muscle length in your hand and wrist. Eventually this could cause pain and restrict your movement.

### **Are there any alternative treatments?**

An alternative to having a thermoplastic splint is to use a generic hand and wrist splint, however this has not been made specifically to fit you and is not always appropriate.

Another alternative treatment is with electrical impulses to stimulate the muscles in your hand and wrist, improving how well they work. However this is not appropriate for everyone.

### **How to use the splint**

Your physiotherapist will have shown you how to fit your splint. The first time you use the splint:

1. Ensure the splint is in the correct position.
2. Ensure the straps for the splint are in the correct position
3. Use the splint for 20 minutes only.
4. Remove the splint and check for any red areas on your arm.

If the red areas do not disappear within 15 minutes after removal, you should stop wearing the splint and contact your physiotherapist.

If using the splint is comfortable and doesn't cause any red areas, then increase the time you use the splint for gradually over the next 7 days, by 30 minutes each day

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The splint can be worn for 2 periods during the day, for no more than 3 hours each time. Ensure that you leave the splint off for at least 1 hour before reapplying it.

The splints we provide are not designed for use during the night unless specifically advised by your physiotherapist.

### **Symptoms to report**

Stop using your splint and contact your physiotherapist as soon as possible if:

- The splint causes a red area on your skin which doesn't disappear after 15 minutes.
- Your hand or forearm becomes significantly more swollen than it would normally be.
- The splint is causing pain.

### **How to care for your splint**

**Wash your splint weekly** with warm soapy water and a cloth. Do not submerge the splint in water as this will damage the straps and Velcro.

**Check your splint regularly for wear and tear** and contact your therapist if parts of the splint need to be repaired.

**Keep the splint away from direct heat**, such as in the window on a sunny day or next to the radiator, as this could cause the splint to change shape.

### **Contact details**

If you have any questions or concerns about your splint please contact:

**City Hospital Physiotherapy**

0121 507 4486

Your physiotherapist is:

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### Further information

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites [www.swbh.nhs.uk](http://www.swbh.nhs.uk) and [www.swbhengage.com](http://www.swbhengage.com), follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs](http://www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs).

### Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- Coppard and Lohman, 'Introduction to splinting: A clinical reasoning and problem-solving approach', 3rd edition, 2008
- Royal College of Physicians, 'National clinical guideline for stroke', 4th edition, 2012

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: [swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net)



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