

Bladder Exstrophy Closure with Spica Cast

Discharge Instructions for Home

When will my child be able to go home?

Your child will be able to go home when

- Your child is eating, drinking, and has had a bowel movement
- Your child is comfortable with their pain controlled with medications by mouth
- Your child is fitted for their car seat for the spica cast
- You are comfortable taking care of your child's catheters, incisions, double diapers and spica cast
- Your follow up visits have been scheduled
- All your questions have been answered

What will my child look like after surgery?

Your child will have a new belly button, an incision, a spica cast, and urine catheters.

How do I take care of the incisions?

- You will watch the incision to make sure it looks healthy, stays dry, and does not look red.
- If stool (poop) gets on the incisions, you may use a saline flush to rinse it off and pat dry.
- If surgical glue was used, it will flake off between 7-14 days after surgery.
- No baths or showers until the spica cast has come off.

What are catheters?

Catheters are tubes that drain urine from your child. Your child will have the following catheters:

- **Suprapubic tube (SP tube):** This large tube will come out of your child's new belly button. It will drain urine from their bladder to a bag or a diaper. This keeps the bladder empty so that it can heal. The SP tube will stay in place for 6-7 weeks.
- **Ureteral catheters:** Your baby may have 2 small ureteral catheters which are also called stents. These are small tubes that come out through the urethra or the belly button. The urethra is the tube the drains urine out of the bladder. These urethral catheters will fall out on their own about 10-14 days after surgery.
- **Urethral catheter:** Your baby may have a small urethral catheter. This tube comes out of the urethra. It will be held in place with a small button on the skin. The urethral catheter will stay in place for 6-7 weeks.

How do I take care of my child's catheters?

We will teach you how to care for the tubes and secure them so they don't pull.

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after you touch the catheter.
- Take care that you do not pull on the catheter.
- Keep the catheters as clean as possible.
- Avoid kinking the catheter. This will block the flow of urine.
- Use a small diaper to wrap around the ends of the catheters to catch the urine. We will show you how to do this.
- If the catheters all stop draining, call your surgeon. You will be instructed on how to flush them to make sure the urine is able to come out of the bladder. We will show you how to do this in an emergency before you leave the hospital.

What is a spica cast?

A spica (spi-kah) cast is put on your child to keep his or her hips and legs from moving. This is done so that the bones and bladder can heal correctly after surgery.

Your child may have some problems if he or she or the spica cast is not cared for correctly. The cast may be itchy and cause skin swelling and redness. He or she may have burning, blisters, sores, infection, or stiff and painful joints. Follow your caregiver's instructions carefully and ask your caregiver questions about your child's care or condition.

How do I keep my child comfortable in the spica cast?

- Do not use the crossbar on the cast to lift or move your child.
- If your child complains of itchiness, you may blow cool air under the cast. You may also gently stroke the nearby skin with a piece of cotton or cloth. Do not use a sharp or pointed object to scratch under the cast. This may cause wounds that can get infected.
- Keep your child's head and upper body in a semi-sitting position at all times. Do this by propping your child's head, shoulder, and back up on pillows.
- Place small pillows or a rolled towel under his or her legs to keep the heels and feet off flat surfaces. Do not let your child's feet and heels rest directly on the mattress. This may cause pressure sores. Pressure sores are bruised areas that can be painful and lead to other problems.
- Turn your child from front to back or side to side every 2-4 hours during the day. Do this as often as you can during the night. You may use pillows to keep your child comfortable.
- For children over 9 months of age, you may use a beanbag chair to help position and prop your child comfortably.
- Your child should always sleep on their back.

How do I use a diaper with a spica cast?

After surgery, we will show you how to place diapers on your child. You will use double diapers plus another diaper to catch urine from their catheters. These diapers keep the cast dry, the catheters clean, and allow the catheters to drain at all times.

- Your baby will wear a normal sized diaper on the inside. Tuck the front of the diaper into the front opening of the cast.
- Then put a larger diaper over the outside of the cast like you normally put a diaper on your child.
- Then turn your child over onto their stomach and tuck in the back. This makes for a nice, tight fit.
- Wrap a third small diaper around the ends of the catheters and tuck it into the outer larger diaper. This is so the cast doesn't get wet and so the catheters do not get soiled if your child has a bowel movement.

How do I move or travel with my child?

- **Lifting:** Carry your child as close to you as possible. When lifting your child by yourself, cradle him or her under the arms and the buttocks, supporting the weight of the cast. When two people are lifting, one person lifts under the shoulders and the other lifts the legs at the same time. Talk about lough to each other so you both lift together in a smooth motion. Bend your knees and keep your back straight while lifting.
- **Stroller:** To move around at home, small children may fit into a stroller or wagon padded with pillows. Use a seat belt if needed to make sure your child will not be able to fall out.

How do I protect the spica cast from damage?

- Check for any cracks, dents, splines, holes, or flaking areas on the cast every day.
- Do not break off rough edges or trim the cast. As your caregiver if you think this needs to be done.
- Make sure that the cast is kept clean and dry.

How do I keep the spica cast clean and dry?

- Cover the cast with a towel, large T-shirt, or bib when your child is eating. This will prevent food and drinks from spilling on or into the cast.
- Change the inner diaper as soon as your child has a bowel movement. Change the outer diapers frequently so they do not soak through.
- Keep your child's head higher than his or her feet. Gravity helps keep urine and bowel movements out of the cast and in the diapers.
- Give your child a sponge bath every day. Wash their skin around all the cast edges using use a mild detergent and a washcloth, and dry well.
- You may use a hair dryer set on Cool to dry a cast that gets wet. This may dry the spica cast faster than just letting it dry by itself. Make sure the hair dryer is not blowing air that is too hot or you may burn your child.
- Your child's cast will get dirty over time, even if you are very careful. You can use clove oil on the cast (no on the skin) to mask the smell. Do not use Febreze as it can cause a chemical burn.

What clothing can my child wear?

- Your child can wear clothes over their cast. Adapt pants, shorts overalls by cutting along the seam and securing the opening with Velcro or snaps.
- Long socks, large T-shirts or sweatshirts are also good options.

What can I expect once the cast is removed?

After many weeks in a cast, your child's joints may be a little stiff. Their skin may be irritated, flaky or red. This will slowly improve. Give your child warm baths to decrease their discomfort and help them regain range of motion. Normal play will reduce stiffness and help them gain strength.

When should I follow up?

- A follow up appointment will be scheduled for every week until the spica cast comes off.
- If your follow up has not been scheduled or you do not know the time, please call our office at **860-545-9395**.

When should I call a doctor?

If your child is having any problems during the day (8:30am-4:30pm Monday – Friday), call our office at **860-545-9395** and ask for the nurse. After hours, call **860-545-9000** and ask the operator for Urology. Call us if your child has any of these warning signs:

- A fever higher than 101.5 F (38.5 C) or chills
- Redness, swelling or tenderness that spreads down from the surgical site
- Not eating or drinking as much as usual for 24 hours
- Pain that is not helped by medicine
- Bleeding or drainage from the surgical site
- Nausea, vomiting, constipation or stomach pain
- Catheter has pulled out or all catheters have stopped draining
- Urine looks different than usual (cloudy, foul smelling, bloody)
- The cast is rubbing a lot, it gets wet or broken or your baby has itching or skin irritation
- Difficulty Breathing
- The cast is tight and does not feel better after having the legs raised for at least ½ hour
- The toes feel cold or change in color
- Any other questions or any other medical concerns.

Urology Clinic: 860-545-9395
Urology Surgery Scheduler: 860-545-9674
Main Hospital Number: 860-545-9000