

MAKING HAND CASTS

Beautiful memories for a family to take home

HOW DOES TOUCH...



Change what feels real?

What does it give a family?



CASTING- ONE OF OUR MOST POWERFUL TOOLS

- Casting is not difficult to do
- Casting is forgiving and flexible
- Casting gives families something absolutely accurate, real, and life sized to help them to remember what their baby was like
- Casting can be done before or after a family leaves
- Make the time to cast!



CASTING STEP ONE: MIXING THE ALGINATE

1. Choose a container

2. Pour in powder, whisk to
Break up lumps

3. Add water- mix with wooden stick until it is
Smooth and like a milkshake. Tap out
Bubbles as you stir.



EXAMPLES OF CONTAINERS

Paper/styrofoam disposable cups- small and large

Soup cups from the cafeteria

Yogurt containers

Flat bottomed tupperwares

Wash basins

Medicine cups

Keep a variety on site, available!



TIPS FOR CHOOSING A CONTAINER

If you can find a container that is disposable (so you can peel it easily off the alginate) use that

Clear containers allow you to see if the limb is touching

Containers should be deep enough that the limb can go in the alginate in a vertical fashion (so you can tap air bubbles to the open surface and they won't get caught, for example, on the top of a foot that is lying horizontally in the container)

Make sure the container is big enough that the body part you are casting does NOT TOUCH THE SIDE.

STEP TWO: MAKE THE NEGATIVE

Carefully put
baby's hand or foot
into the alginate

Try to angle it so
that it is as
vertical as
possible.

Check that it does
not touch the side



-Alginate becomes
springy when set

-Wiggle baby's limb in a
circular motion until
you feel the suction
break

-Carefully wiggle baby's
limb out. It often works
to simply push the long
bone sideways (across
the top) and the limb
will pop out.

WAIT UNTIL THE ALGinate IS SET



MIX UP DENTAL STONE AND POUR.

Wisk when dry to remove lumps

Add water and mix using a wooden stick until it reaches the consistency of thick gravy

Stone can be very bubbly- as you mix, tap on counter to help to bring air bubbles to the top

Pour into holes little by little, pouring and then swirling to coat, then pouring again. Be careful to fill fingers/toes

Tap the container as you fill it, and again several times after holes are filled to bring air bubbles to the top



LET IT REST.

Dental stone takes several hours

Give it as much time as you can before uncasting.

I feel most comfortable when it's left overnight



UNCASTING THE HANDS AND FEET

Use a scalpel to cut away a paper cup or to go around the edges of a rigid container. Carefully remove contents.



CAREFULLY BEGIN TO REMOVE ALGINATE.

Start with a scalpel cut and carefully begin to open the mold with your hands. When you begin to see where the fingers and toes lie, choose a spot to begin to cut away the larger chunks of alginate.





SLOWLY,
SLOWLY...

Scrape away
the alginate
using your
fingers, a
scalpel, or a
pin. Be
careful of
those tiny
fingers!



SOME MORE EXAMPLES...

A big baby foot...



17 WEEKS GESTATION- IN A 2 INCH
TUPPERWARE



17 WEEKS GESTATION- CAST IN A MEDICINE CUP

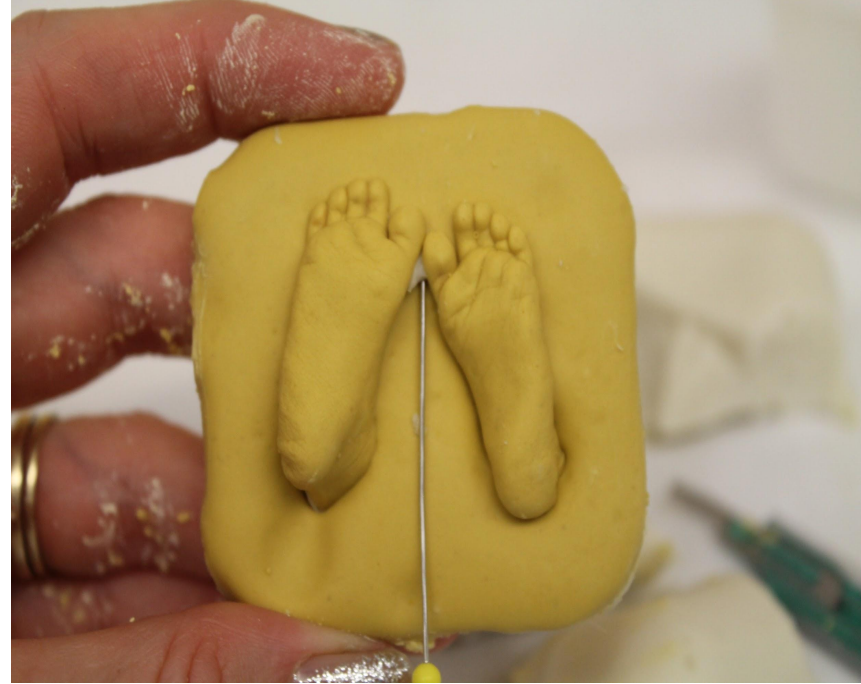


FULL TERM COLLECTION OF CASTS



FINISHING THE CAST

- Use a pin to pick out any remaining alginate
- If it seems stuck give it a few hours to dry and shrink a little
- Use a pin or nail file to carefully pop off any tiny air bubbles



SENDING CASTS HOME WITH THE FAMILY

- Casts need a separate box and each cast should be individually wrapped
- I put a list on the top of the wrapped items so the family knows how many items there are and they can remove them from the box carefully



MAKING REAL WHAT IS NO LONGER THE

All memory making work:

- Provides evidence of a life
- Confirms parents' roles in that very important life
- Captures caring and emotion
- Freezes time through visual and sensory tools to bring a family back to the time they had with their baby
- There can never be too many mementos or photographs.

