



Custom Post-Op Spinal Brace

Wear and care guide for patients

Scottish National Spine Service



Your child has recently been fitted with a new Spinal Brace to help protect their growing rods. This is a custom medical device which has been designed for use by your child only. This leaflet will provide some information on how to apply the brace, look after your child's skin, and maintain the brace.

It may be necessary for your child to use their Spinal Brace in conjunction with other medical devices such as a wheelchair or leg braces. If this is the case your Orthotist will make sure the brace fits well alongside this.

Applying your brace

- Make sure all the straps are outside the brace and tabbed back on themselves securely.
- Ensure you have a safe and secure place and that you have a suitable, clean vest on.
- Spread the brace from the waist, twisting your child's body into it. The brace can be stiff when new, but this should improve with time and wear.
- The opening of the brace should be centered on your child's back so the bumps of their spine and the crease between the buttocks are in the middle of the opening.
- Push the brace down by placing hands on their hips – the waist pads on the inside of the brace should rest just above your hips and below your ribs.
- Ask your child to lean forward on to their forearms on a flat surface such as a table or counter – now thread the straps through the buckles.
- Apply pressure with the flat of one hand to the side opposite the buckle. At the same time pull the velcro strap with the other hand towards the hand applying pressure.

- Secure the bottom strap first, then the top and middle.
- At the time of fitting your Orthotist will apply a mark on the straps as a guide for how tight to fasten your brace.

The link below shows a video with some useful tips for putting on your brace:

<https://services.nhslothian.scot/scottishnationalspineservice/brace-useful-tips/>



Removing the brace:

- Remove or lower any clothing that may be in the way.
- Unfasten all straps making sure they are tabbed back on themselves to prevent them getting tangled and wearing quicker.
- Spread the brace from the waist, twisting your child's body out of it.
- Check your skin for any marking or redness that is not usually there.
- Check the brace for any wear and tear.
- Make sure the brace is stored in a secure place.
- Any concerns should be reported to your Orthotist.

Breaking in the brace

Your Orthotist will discuss an individual wear in regime which will suit your child best. It is important we establish full time day wear as quickly as possible to ensure the growing rods are protected and normal daily activities can carry on.

Apply the brace for the agreed time and then remove. Check your child's skin after removing. It is important to become familiar with normal pressure areas and what is acceptable skin marking. Their

skin will be pink in certain areas - your Orthotist will point these out. If skin marking is not of concern, then aim to wear the brace a little longer the next day. If you have any concerns, then contact your Orthotist for advice.

Successful brace wearing

- Gradually build up to all day wear. We usually advise brace goes on when getting dressed in the morning and removed when into nightwear. However please be mindful of your child's activity levels out with these times.
- If you experience any discomfort or barriers to wear, then please contact your Orthotist immediately.
- Take care of your skin daily and wear a Boston T or snug fitting vest/ t-shirt at all times under your brace.
- Properly apply brace to body.
- Clean the brace daily.
- Brace aims to protect the growth rods without limiting movement completely.

More information on bracing can be found on the Scottish National Spine service website. The link below shows a video with some useful tips for putting on your brace:

<https://services.nhsllothian.scot/scottishnationalspineservice/brace-useful-tips/>

Skin care

It is important to become familiar with normal pressure areas and what is acceptable skin marking. Your skin may become pink in certain areas - your Orthotist will point these out.

It is very important to **prevent skin breakdown** - sore, red, raw skin. The skin under the brace needs to be toughened up, especially

where the brace applies the most pressure. If you have any concerns, then contact your Orthotist for advice.

To protect the skin:

- Shower/bathe daily. Apply alcohol gel to all parts of the skin your brace covers every day. Gel can be purchased at local pharmacy and some supermarkets (**Spirigel, Cuticura** etc. are some brand names). Alcohol gel plus the friction of your hand will toughen the skin.
- Pay special attention to pink areas of the skin where the brace pressure is highest.
- Always wear a Boston T or snug fitting t-shirt/vest under the brace.
- Always wear underwear and clothing over the brace to prevent skin breakdown around the elastic waistband.
- Ensure the brace is tightened as advised by your Orthotist, as a loose brace may rub and cause skin breakdown.
- The use of dry corn flour or talc on skin is often helpful in hot weather or on skin sensitive to alcohol. **Initially do not use creams or lotions under the brace as they will soften the skin.**

Sometimes the skin over the waist and hips gets darker. This is common and not something you should worry about. When the brace treatment is complete the discoloration will fade.

Cleaning your brace

It is important to clean the foam liner of the brace daily. The foam will not absorb moisture; however, perspiration will collect on it. Wipe inside and out with a damp cloth/anti-bacterial wipe. Rub the lining with alcohol gel and leave to dry. Stubborn marks on the outside can be removed with nail polish remover.

Planned reviews

Your Orthotist will discuss your specific follow up plan but generally we will aim to review you around the time of your lengthening procedure.

At every point of contact we will discuss a timeframe for next review. This may be by specifically booking a date and appointment time but may also be through our Planned Repeat List (PRL) process.

Unplanned reviews

If you experience any problems with your brace such as discomfort, redness or skin break down you should contact your Orthotist immediately.

How long should my spinal brace last?

You have been supplied with one spinal brace and the length of time it lasts will depend on how quickly you grow, but also your lengthening surgery. These are some signs that your brace is getting small:

- Brace not going on as easily as usual.
- Struggling to fasten the straps to the marks.
- Discomfort/ tightness where it has not been before.
- Trouble eating in brace when you have not had before.
- Red/ abraded marks or bruising on the skin from areas of discomfort.
- Brace no longer sitting as high over chest or shoulder blades. It is important we maintain this height to protect your growing rods.

It is important we resolve any issues with fit or comfort quickly to ensure the brace continues to perform as intended and normal activity levels can continue.

Please also notify us of any issues or incidents you have had in regards to the brace even if you have managed to resolve these at home.

Brace repairs

It is important to check you brace regularly for signs of wear and tear:

- The buckles and straps should all be attached securely.
- The Velcro should be strong and stay fastened securely.
- The elastic should be securely attached to the plastic and not coming away.
- All edges of the brace should be smooth.

We would ask that you call should the brace need repaired in any way. This can often be done by our workshop without the need for an appointment with your Orthotist.

Disposing of the brace

Once your child's brace has been outgrown and replaced you are welcome to keep it. However if you chose not to your Orthotist will dispose of it. Unfortunately we are not able to reuse or recycle the brace in any way. If for any reason you have to dispose of the brace at home, please make sure it has no information that would identify you. It can be disposed of in your non recycling bin.

The contact details for our department are:

Orthotist Name:

The Orthotics Department

SMART Building

Astley Ainslie Hospital

133 Grange Loan

Edinburgh

EH9 2HL

Telephone: 0131 537 9177 (option 2)

Job Number:



Unique Device Indicator



Single Patient
Multiple Use



Keep away from direct
sunlight/heat sources



Keep dry - protect from moisture



Consult instructions for use (IFU)

For a copy of this booklet in larger print, Braille, or your community language (Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Urdu or Polish), please call 0131 536 9434.