

Addenbrooke's Rehabilitation Clinic 9 (ARC 9) (Orthotics Department)

Patient information about spinal Orthoses

General information

A spinal Orthosis is a brace custom designed to help control the movement of the back. Your doctor has recommended the use of a Spinal Orthosis to help control and/or prevent further curvature in your spine.

Wearing

Proper fit and placement (your Orthotist will demonstrate this)

You should always wear your brace over a close fitting cotton T-shirt or vest. Before fitting your brace, make sure that the material is smooth to avoid any folds or wrinkles in the material.

Your brace is designed to fit your body as snugly as possible in order for it to be effective. When putting your brace on it is important to position the indentations on the side of the brace, above the hip bones and just below the ribs or in a line with the belly button. The front edge of the jacket will come very low in front and press slightly on top of your legs when sitting. The bottom back of the jacket will be approximately one inch above the sitting surface.

Make sure the straps are secured firmly. If the brace is too loose then skin abrasions may occur.

Wear time

When you are first fitted with your brace you should wear into it gradually. This allows you to get used to wearing the brace and allows the skin to gradually build up resistance to the pressures which the brace is applying. You should check your skin regularly during the first few weeks. You may experience some general muscle aches until you are used to wearing the brace.

Days 1 and 2 – Wear the brace for one hour

Days 3 and 4 – Wear the brace for two hours

Days 5 and 6 – Wear the brace for three hours

Days 7 and 8 – Wear the brace for four hours

Week 2 – Wear brace six to eight hours

Week 3 – Wear brace 12 hours

Week 4 – Wear brace at night time and during the day for 16 – 20 hours

Week 5 onwards – Increase time wearing brace up to 23 hours per day.

Usually the brace should be worn most of the day and night (23 hours) with only a short break for washing. **Continuity of wear is vital.** However, your brace can be removed for contact sports and exercises that require agility as well as occasionally for parties or other social events. Your Orthotist will let you know if your wearing regime is different to this.

Skin care information

Your skin should be inspected regularly, especially in the first few weeks after been fitted with a new brace. Reddening is normal, especially where the brace is applying corrective pressures. Check your skin thoroughly under the jacket especially over bony areas, under the arms and across the top of the thighs for any red or irritated spots every day. If you see a red area that does not go away within 30 minutes of removing the brace or notice a break in the skin or blisters this should be reported to your Orthotist for either attention or advice.

Skin irritations

Skin irritations may occur from moisture and bacteria on the skin or if the jacket is not positioned or secured properly.

- Wiping the skin with alcohol wipes will help reduce moisture and bacteria on the skin under the jacket.
- Try changing the T-shirt more often and keeping the area clean and dry.
- If you get the brace wet, it must be completely dry before you put it back on.
- Check the position and tightness of your brace.

If the problem persists you should contact your Orthotist.

Caring for your spinal orthosis

Cleaning

Use an antibacterial soap and water to clean your brace. Rubbing alcohol may be used to wipe the jacket to help destroy bacteria that may be present and to remove soap residue. Towel dry the brace completely before putting it back on.

Straps and padding

The straps and padding may become worn and can be replaced. To arrange repairs please contact the Orthotic department.

Review

It is important to keep regular appointments with your Doctor and Orthotist so that your progress can be monitored.

Children may need several brace changes as they grow or gain weight. Minor adjustments can be made to the brace and we would recommend that your brace is reviewed by an Orthotist at least every four to six months.

Never attempt to repair or adjust your brace yourself. If you are experiencing any problems or have questions regarding your brace, please contact your Orthotist.

The contact details for the department are:

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For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



Document history

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