



Patient Information  
Children's Made-to-Measure  
Spinal Braces



## Spinal Brace Prescription

A spinal brace is prescribed for several different reasons:

- To provide support to the torso to enable your child to sit without needing help.
- To enable a better sitting position in a wheelchair or specialised seating.
- To correct the alignment of the spine so that it is straighter.
- To prevent an abnormal curve of the spine getting worse.
- To protect the spine while it is healing from injury such as a fracture.
- To protect the spine while it is healing from surgery.

## Putting on the Spinal Brace

The spinal brace can be put on in a variety of different ways, and this will depend on which method you find easier or which way your child finds easier. Although you may be instructed by your Orthotist that the brace has to be put on in a particular manner. We recommend that a cotton t-shirt or vest is worn underneath the spinal brace as this will make the brace more comfortable and help with sweating.

The brace normally opens at the front and then fastens with several Velcro straps. We will explain which is the top and bottom of the brace, but we can also write this on the inside of the brace should you find this helpful if the brace is to be fitted at school, etc. The easiest way to put the spinal brace on is for your child to be lay on their back on a bed or on the floor. If your child is small enough, you should bend their knees with their feet still on the bed and then place one arm under their knees and lift their back off the bed. The brace can then be slide underneath their back. If you child is older or it is not easy to lift them in this way, it is sometimes easier to sit them up and then lay them back into the brace. The brace can also be fitted with your child standing.

The brace should be fitted so that the bottom edge of the back of the brace is just above the buttocks, and there should be a reasonable amount of space between the top of the brace and the armpits. If your child can not lay their arms by their sides then the brace is too high on the torso and needs to be pulled down lower. If the brace moves up when your child sits down then it is too low and needs to be pulled higher. The middle strap should be fastened first, followed by the bottom and then the top strap. Once all the straps have been fastened they should be undone one at a time and then fastened tighter.

We appreciate that it is difficult to decide how tight to fasten the straps, as you are worried of hurting your child. If the straps are not tight enough then the brace can not control the spine and the brace won't be effective. Once the straps have been fastened you should be able to get your finger underneath the strap without it hurting your finger.

## Wearing the Spinal Brace

It is not unusual that when wearing the brace for the first few times your child will find it uncomfortable. We therefore suggest that the amount of time the brace is worn is slowly increased. Unless instructed otherwise, the brace should initially be worn for 30-60 minutes, the wearing time can then be increased by 30-60 minutes each day. When wearing the brace for the first few times, some children can also feel as if they want to be sick or as if they can not breathe. This is because the brace is compressing the torso, again just increasing the wearing time slowly and your child should get use to this feeling.

It is common for the brace to leave red marks or impressions in the skin anywhere the brace has been touching or underneath the straps. These should disappear 30 minutes after the brace has been removed. If you find that the red marks are still present a long time after the brace has been removed or the brace is causing blistering, stop wearing the brace and contact the Orthotics department immediately.

We recommend that you check your child's skin every time the brace has been worn or if the brace has been worn for a prolonged period. The brace may have to be loosened slightly for a short period if your child has eaten a large meal to avoid discomfort. The Consultant, Orthotist or Spinal Nurse will advise you on how many hours a day, weeks or months your child will have to wear the spinal brace for.

## Cleaning the Spinal Brace

- The brace should be wiped with a damp cloth or antibacterial wipe. Please avoid using cleaning products or chemicals on the brace, as this will damage the brace and could cause skin irritation.
- The brace should be thoroughly dry before it is fitted again. Let the brace air dry, do not place the brace near any heat sources or use a hair dryer as this could damage the brace.

## Repairs and Replacements

- Minor repairs such as broken straps or replacing small areas of padding can usually be done in the clinic. Please contact the orthotics department to arrange a time for you to come in for the repairs to be done. Depending on the number of repairs needed, this will usually take 10-30 minutes.
- If the brace is no longer fitting properly because your child has grown, please contact the orthotics department to arrange a review appointment. This will usually require a new cast to be taken, so please bring some clean underwear for your child for once the cast has been done.

## Contact Details

Orthotics Department:	
Hospital:	
Address:	
Tel:	
Email:	
Your Orthotist is:	

If you require this information in another language, please contact us on the above details.

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