



Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust

Wearing a spinal brace after surgery: information for children and young people

You have had an operation on your spine so now you need to protect it while it heals. Wearing a spinal brace is one way of doing this. This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) tells you about the spinal brace, how to put it on and take it off, and how to look after it. It also says what sort of checks you need to do each day when you are wearing the brace.

Information for Date started

Type of spinal brace Boston brace Anterior Posterior Bivalve

Supplied and fitted by

Next review appointment

If you have any questions about your spinal brace, please call 020 7405 9200 ext 5617 or email orthoticsteam@gosh.nhs.uk

Putting on the spinal brace

You may need someone to help you put on your spinal brace and make sure it is done up properly.

1. Put on a snug fitting vest or t-shirt – you should always wear something under your brace and change it regularly, more often in hot weather. It might be more comfortable to find a vest or t-shirt without side seams.
2. Lying down makes it easier to put on the brace
3. Roll gently onto your side
4. Your helper should slide the back part of the brace under you
5. Roll back onto your back on top of the brace
6. Lay the front part of the brace over you
7. Make sure the brace is at the level you were shown – snug around your waist and not digging into your hips
8. Fasten the straps and then adjust so they are all evenly snug – do not fasten them so tightly that the brace is uncomfortable but it does need to be tight enough to protect your spine.

Taking off the spinal brace

Again, you may need someone to help you take off your spinal brace.

1. Lying down makes it easier to take off the brace
2. Loosen then undo the top strap first then the bottom strap
3. Lift off the front part of the brace
4. Roll gently onto your side
5. Your helper should gently slide the back part of the brace from underneath you

Checking your skin

Initially, you should check your skin for pressure areas every 30 to 60 minutes or so – you have to take off the brace to do this, you should be able to look at your front easily enough but you may need help to check the skin on your back. Once you are more used to the brace, you should check your skin every time you take off the brace.

- The spinal brace may make faint red marks on your skin, in the same way your trouser waistband may leave a mark. These marks should fade within 20 to 30 minutes of taking off the brace.
- Do not put any greasy ointment, cream or powder on your skin unless we have suggested it. If you use moisturiser, make sure it has soaked in well before you put on the vest or t-shirt.
- The brace should not hurt, cause blisters or broken skin or sore areas – if any of these happen, stop using the brace and contact the Orthotics team as soon as possible.

Caring for the brace

- Clean the jacket with a damp cloth and soapy water, then leave to air dry – away from any heat sources such as a radiator or in direct sunlight.
- If the jacket breaks or the straps become worn, contact your orthotist immediately as it can take up to four weeks to make a new jacket.

Everyday life with the brace

- You should wear the brace as instructed above but take it off when you have a shower or bath and make sure your skin is completely dry before you put it back on.
- You should be able to wear your usual clothes over the top of the brace but you might find looser styles more comfortable and easier to put on and take off.
- Your physio will have shown you your home exercise programme – make sure you do the exercises as instructed and as often as you were told.