

# A guide to your child's spinal orthosis



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## What is a spinal orthosis?

A spinal orthosis is a brace worn around the torso which supports your child's spine and pelvis.

The spinal orthosis will be designed to meet your child's specific needs – as each person is unique, so is their response to treatment.

## What does a spinal orthosis do?

A spinal orthosis controls the movement of your child's back and supports their spine and pelvis. A spinal orthosis can be used:

- To aid healing of fractures
- To reduce pain
- To reduce motion of the joints, ligaments and muscles in your child's back
- To support weak muscles
- Post-operatively

## How is a spinal orthosis put on?

Your orthotist will demonstrate how to put a spinal orthosis on your child. The most important things to remember are:

1. Your child should wear a cotton top underneath the brace, covering the whole surface area so there is no direct contact between the brace and your child's skin. There should be no creases in the garment – any excess material should be pulled round and gathered at the opening of the spinal orthosis.
2. Ensure the straps are all fastened securely so the spinal orthosis does not move around when worn.

## How long should my child wear a spinal orthosis for?

Your orthotist will advise how long your child should wear their spinal brace for. It takes a while to get used to wearing a spinal orthosis, and it may feel uncomfortable at first. Gradually build up the length of wear time, until your child can wear as required.

Day 1 and 2: 1 hour

Day 3 and 4: 2-4 hours

Day 5 and 6: 4-6 hours

Day 7 and 8: 6-8 hours

Day 9 and 10: 12+ hours

Day 11+: wear the brace during the day and at night time up to 23 hours

Most children wear the brace all day and all night, however it can be removed for washing, sports that require agility, or occasional social events. Your child should stop wearing the brace if it is causing severe pain or discomfort.

## Skin care

It is important that you regularly check your child's skin, especially in the first couple of weeks. Some red marks are normal; however, if the reddening is severe or if there is any blistering or breakage of the skin, you should stop your child wearing the device and contact your orthotist.

In particular, you should check the skin thoroughly over bony areas, under the arms and across the top of the thighs.

## Caring for your child's spinal orthosis

Like any orthosis, the lifespan of a spinal brace depends on how often it is worn and how well it is cared for.

You can prolong the life of your child's spinal brace by keeping it clean and dry. To clean the brace, wipe it lightly with a damp cloth. Do not soak in water. Dry the brace with a towel or leave it to dry naturally.

Do not expose the spinal brace to excessive heat, for example do not dry it on top of a radiator or by a fire.

The Velcro® straps and lining can be replaced when they wear out.

If you feel your child is outgrowing their spinal orthosis, you should contact your orthotist. Do not try to adjust the brace yourself.