

# Spinal brace

## What is a spinal brace?

A spinal brace is worn to support or correct the alignment of the spine. It is made of rigid thermoplastic and has straps to keep it fastened and pads to help you feel more comfortable.



## How do you put your spinal brace on?

Most people need some help putting their spinal brace on at first, but with some practice you might learn to put it on by yourself.

To put your brace on, open the brace in front of your body and stretch and hook one side around your right hip. Now open the other side and stretch it around your left hip. Move the brace up and down until it sits in the most naturally comfortable position, anchoring onto your pelvis. Fasten the middle strap first, then the bottom strap and finally the top strap. Lastly, tighten all of the straps as firmly as you can to reduce any movement between the brace and your body.

## Getting used to your brace

Your brace may feel uncomfortable at first but your body will get used to it. It is suggested that you spend one week working up to wearing it for 22 to 23 hours per day by slowly increasing the amount of time you are wearing it every day.

Your orthotist will mark the straps for you so you can build up to the necessary tightness. The more you wear your brace, the faster you will get used to it.



## When to wear your brace

You must wear your spinal brace for 22 to 23 hours per day unless otherwise advised by your doctor. Studies have shown that you must wear your brace for the suggested number of hours to achieve the best possible result.

## Caring for your brace

Just like a piece of clothing, your brace needs to be cleaned. To wash your brace, wipe it out using a damp cloth, cold water and a soap or detergent that works well with your skin. Completely dry your brace before you put it back on. Never put your brace in the washing machine.

Do not leave your brace in a hot area such as in a car in the sun as it is made out of a heat sensitive material and can change shape when exposed to a high temperature.

If the sticky velcro on your straps becomes full of lint you can pull it out using a toothbrush. If your straps fray or break, you can phone the Orthotics Department at PCH to have them repaired.

## Caring for your skin

When you first start wearing your brace it will apply a lot of new pressures to your skin. You need to check your skin closely every day to check for any breakdown or sores. If you notice any sores, skin breakdown, blisters, rubbing or aggressive redness, phone the Orthotics Department to speak to your orthotist.

Some people find they develop a rash when first wearing the brace, though this is very rare. If you notice a rash developing, seek advice from a pharmacist or your GP. You may also wish to inform your orthotist.

## Clothing

Generally, most people wear a singlet or t-shirt underneath their brace to feel more comfortable and absorb any sweat between the brace and the skin. The rest of your clothes can be worn on top of the brace, including your school uniform. Your clothes may fit differently on top of the brace and this is okay – you will quickly learn which of your clothes you feel comfortable wearing with your brace.

## Self-image

It may take you a while to get used to your brace being a part of your everyday life. People at school may notice you wear a brace and ask you a few questions about it – that's okay! They are probably just curious and the best thing to do is answer their questions so that it doesn't turn into a big deal. It might be a good idea to tell your close friends about your brace; you will be surprised by how accepting they are. They may also come in handy if you ever need help taking off or putting on your brace during the day at school.

## Review appointments

After your spinal brace has been fitted a review appointment will be organised with your orthotist. Usually the orthotist will ask that you have an x-ray before your review

appointment to check that the brace is having a positive effect on the spine. The orthotist will then check how your brace is fitting and make any necessary adjustments. Your orthopaedic spinal doctor will also see you regularly for a review of your spine and x-rays. They are responsible for the care and health of your spine. Your orthotist is responsible for your brace.

### Important things to remember

It is important to remember it will take you some time to get used to wearing your brace – but after a little while you won't even notice you're wearing it.

Please phone the PCH Orthotics Department on 6456 0411 or email [PCHOutpatients.Orthotics@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:PCHOutpatients.Orthotics@health.wa.gov.au) if you are concerned about the fit of your brace in any way.

Your orthotist is \_\_\_\_\_.

Your next appointment is \_\_\_\_\_.



Government of **Western Australia**  
Child and Adolescent Health Service

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on request for a person with a disability.**

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