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Wilmington Scoliosis Brace Care and Use Guide

You have just received your new orthosis which was designed and custom made especially for you. Please refer to the following instructions for the care and use of your brace. The goal is to wear this orthosis 12 to 16 hours per day within 3 to 4 weeks without any complications.

This requires that you:

- Are able to apply the orthosis properly to your body.
- Take care of your skin and monitor it daily for any irritation.
- Clean the orthosis daily as well as yourself. Personal hygiene is most important.
- Begin wearing your orthosis gradually. Follow the attached wearing schedule.
- Always wear a cotton or cotton-blend undergarment, preferably without seams.
- Wear your orthosis as tightly as possible.

Application (you may need someone to assist you in this process):

- Make sure all of the straps are on the outside of the orthosis.
- Step forward into the orthosis while your helper spreads open the front of the brace.
- Make sure the orthosis is facing straight ahead and is not twisted. The opening of the brace should be in the front so that your belly button is centered between the edges of the openings.
- Bend your hips and knees to about 45-degrees, the orthosis will fit properly when this is done.
- With your hands on the hip portion of the orthosis, push it toward your feet so that the sausage-shaped pads on the inside fit above your hip bones and below your rib cage on both sides. This will provide maximum comfort and make it easier to breathe.
- Pull the extra cloth from your undershirt out at the opening in the back. Make sure there are no wrinkles in your shirt which can cause sores on your skin.
- Have your helper thread the Velcro straps through the buckles and fasten them loosely.
- Next, lie supine (face up) on the floor or bed and have your helper tighten the straps to the marks provided by your orthotist.
- Once this has been done, bend your knees to a 45-degree angle and push down at the waist of the brace to lock it in place at your pelvis.

Wearing Schedule:

- See attached wear schedule.

Skin Maintenance:

- It is important to prevent skin breakdown (sore, red and raw). The skin under the orthosis needs to be toughened up, especially where the orthosis presses the hardest. In order to accomplish this, the following are simple tasks you will need to do:
- Bathe daily. Hygiene is very important.
- Apply rubbing alcohol with your hands to all parts of the skin that come in contact with the orthosis, especially in the areas where the brace presses in the hardest.
- Observe your skin frequently during the initial break- in period of your orthosis.
- If there is skin breakdown (sore, red, raw), the orthosis must not be reapplied until the skin heals. This may take 24-48 hours. If this happens, please call your orthotist for advice.

Orthosis Care:

- Cleaning of both the outer shell and the inner soft foam should be done daily. Use a mild soap and warm water or an alcohol spray. Wipe dry with a clean towel or let the brace air dry.
- Do not leave your orthosis near any heat source as it may deform the plastic.

Daily Exercises:

- Exercises make up a very important part of your overall orthotic treatment. You will see your physical therapist for recommendations of an exercise program. Most likely, it will consist of exercises used to strengthen your muscles while you are wearing your orthosis. These will be done during the time you are spending your one hour of freedom. Since you are in the brace for so many hours per day, your muscles will become de-conditioned and lose their strength. Doing these exercises from the beginning will make the orthosis much more comfortable to wear.

Activities:

- Upon your physician's approval, you may participate in many sports and physical activities while wearing your orthosis.

If at any time you have questions or concerns, please contact us at Paul Valentine Orthotics and Prosthetics (804-355-0283)

Wilmington Scoliosis Wear Schedule

Stage 1: Goal - wear the orthosis for 6 hours.

- Apply your orthosis properly and wear it for 2 hours straight without removing it. Take it off and **check your skin**.
- If the skin is **pink**, put the orthosis back on for 2 more hours. **Check your skin**. Repeat for 2 more hours, assuming there are no skin issues.
- If the skin is **red and sore**, give care if needed and leave the orthosis off for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, put the brace back on.
- During the school year, this stage is done easily after coming home. This stage will take approximately 1 day to complete.

Stage 2: Goal - wear the orthosis for 10 hours.

- Once Stage 1 is complete, the next stage is wearing your orthosis for 10 hours. It is difficult to accomplish this stage during school, so this stage is best accomplished during the weekend.
- Begin by wearing your orthosis for 4 hours. Then remove it and **check the skin**, give care if needed. Put the brace back on for 2 hours, **check the skin**, and give care if needed. Repeat this process every 2 hours until you have worn the orthosis for 10 hours, assuming there are no skin issues.
- If the skin is **red and sore**, give care if needed and wait 30 minutes before putting the orthosis back on again.
- When this stage is complete, the orthosis can be worn to school.
- This stage usually takes 1 to 2 days or a weekend to complete.

Stage 3: Goal - wear the orthosis for 12-16 hours.

- Once you have tolerated wearing your orthosis for 10 hours straight, you can proceed to wearing it for 12 to 16 hours. This can be done by putting the brace on in the morning and wearing it after school when you arrive home. .
- Before bed, take it off to **check your skin**. Put the brace back on.
- Wear the orthosis all night without checking your skin unless you are experiencing discomfort.

Stage 4: Goal - wear the orthosis for 23 hours. (use this stage if a 23 hour wearer)

- Once you can sleep in your orthosis overnight, you can move on to wearing it all day and night except for 1 hour. The hour you are out of the brace is used for taking care of your skin, washing, and doing your out-of-orthosis exercises.
- Use the following schedule as an example.
- **Before bed:** Wash your orthosis. While your brace is drying, complete your exercises, bathe and care for your skin. Apply a clean t-shirt and reapply your brace at the end of the hour.
- **In the morning:** Take off your orthosis to care for your skin. Reapply a clean t-shirt and your brace.

- After 4 hours (at lunch time), take the orthosis off and **check your skin**. Put the brace back on with the help of the school nurse or a close friend. You should instruct your helper on how to correctly apply the orthosis. After school, take the brace off and **check your skin**. Give care if needed.
- **After school:** Take off your orthosis to care for your skin. Reapply t-shirt and your brace.

Other Important Notes:

- Do not move from one stage to the next until the current stage is fully complete.
- Report skin care problems to your orthotist who may suggest alternate care techniques.
- Initially the orthosis may be loosened slightly during meals if needed. Eating smaller meals more frequently may help.

If at any time you have questions or concerns, please contact us at the number listed below.