

Thoraco-lumbar spinal orthosis (TLSO)

Parents' guide



What is a TLSO spinal brace?

A TLSO spinal brace is a thermoplastic custom made brace made to control your child's spinal curvature. It can be designed to fasten down the front (one piece), or down the sides (two piece).

Who needs to wear a spinal brace?

Your child has been asked to wear a spinal brace to try and control their spinal posture and/or to slow deterioration of their curve whilst they grow.

When does my child need to wear their spinal brace?

Your child's spinal consultant will inform you how long your child needs to wear their brace for. Usually, if your child has a neurodisability or has growth rods, they will need to wear the brace throughout the daytime. It can be removed for swimming, bathing, during therapy and at bed time.

If they have early onset or adolescent idiopathic scoliosis, then the brace must be worn for 23 hours a day, including in bed. It can be removed for bathing. Research shows those who wear the brace the longest, have the greatest benefit.

How do I put the brace on?

The brace should be worn over a thin cotton close fitting vest or t-shirt. Turning this inside out can avoid rubbing from the seams. Other clothing can then be worn over the top of the brace to reduce pressure under it.

To apply a one piece brace

If your child is able to sit or stand on their own:

- Stretch the brace apart and wrap it around their middle from behind, placing the opening at the front.
- Lie your child down in the brace, with their knees bent up. Pull the brace into the correct position so that the waist of the brace lines up with their waist.
- Tighten the straps firmly so that the brace is secured around their hips, waist and chest. Make sure the strap across the hips is done up firmly so the brace does not slide up.

If your child cannot sit unaided:

- Sit them forward with support.
- Wrap the brace around their middle and roll or lie down onto their back.

You should then be able perform the next steps as in the paragraph above.

To apply a two piece spinal brace

- Put the back part of the brace onto the bed then lie your child onto this. Make sure their waist is lined up with the waist of the brace.
- Lay the front half of the brace on top of their chest. Make sure there is an equal overlap on both sides and that the waist lines up.
- Tighten the straps so the brace is secured over the hips, waist and chest. Make sure the strap across the hips is done up firmly so the brace does not slide up.

The amount of time in the brace should be gradually built up initially to improve your child's tolerance of the brace.

Skin care

You should check your child's skin every day after they've been wearing their brace. This is particularly important if your child has any changes in their sensation.

The brace may cause some marking or redness, but should not cause any bruises, blisters or pain. If red marks do not disappear within 30 minutes of removing the brace, then contact the physiotherapists on 020 7188 4660 to make an appointment to review the brace.

The brace should initially be worn for a couple of hours a day, gradually building up until it is being worn for the prescribed time.

Special considerations

If your child has a gastrostomy, a hole will be cut out of their brace to allow for this. A small hole will also need to be cut into their vest to pass the feeding tube through the hole in the brace.

If they wear nappies, their therapist will advise as to whether you need to remove the brace for toileting.

If your child has a moulded seat or supports on either side of their wheelchair, their chair will need a review with your local wheelchair service to make sure they can wear the brace whilst in their chair.

How do I know if my child needs a brace?

If you can get more than two fingers underneath the armpit at the top of the brace, if your child's shape has changed or the brace is loose, then your child may need a new brace.

Braces normally need a review every 9-12 months after the initial fitting, depending on the amount of growth your child has had.

You do not have to wait for your spinal appointment to book into the orthotics clinic.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns with your child's brace, please contact the children's physiotherapy team, **t:** 020 7188 4660, (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit

w: www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

The British Scoliosis Society

w: www.britscoliosissoc.org.uk

Scoliosis Association UK

w: www.sauk.org.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS)

e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints)

e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815

e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

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