

# TLSO spinal brace

## Parents' guide



## **What is a TLSO spinal brace?**

TLSO stands for thoraco-lumbar sacral orthosis. 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 (1- piece), or down the sides (2-piece).

## **Who needs a spinal brace?**

Your child has been asked to wear a spinal brace to try and control their spinal posture, or to slow down the deterioration of their curve while they grow.

## **When your child should wear their spinal brace**

Your child's spinal consultant will tell 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 during the day. It can be removed for swimming, bathing, during therapy, and at bed time.

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

## How to put the brace on

The brace should be worn over a thin, cotton, close-fitting vest or T-shirt. Turning this inside out can stop the seams rubbing. Other clothing can then be worn over the top of the brace.

### To apply a 1-piece brace

If your child can sit or stand on their own:

- 1 Stretch the brace apart, and wrap it around their middle from behind, placing the opening at the front.
- 2 Lie your child down in the brace, with their knees bent up.
- 3 Pull the brace into the correct position so that the waist of the brace lines up with their waist.
- 4 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 without help:

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

You should then be able to do steps 3 and 4 as above.

## **To apply a 2-piece spinal brace**

- Put the back part of the brace onto the bed then lie your child onto it. 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.

At first, the brace should only be worn for about 2 hours each day. This should be gradually increased until it is being worn for the prescribed amount of time. This should 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 might 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, contact the physiotherapists, **phone** 020 7188 4660 to make an appointment to review the brace.

## 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 you 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 while in their chair.

## How to know if your child needs a new brace

Your child should have a new brace if:

- you can get more than 2 fingers underneath the armpit at the top of the brace
- your child's shape has changed
- the brace is loose

Braces normally need a review every 9 to 12 months after the first fitting, depending on how much your child has grown.

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

## Support and more information

**The British Scoliosis Society**

**web** [www.britscoliosissoc.org.uk](http://www.britscoliosissoc.org.uk)

**Scoliosis Association UK**

**web** [www.sauk.org.uk](http://www.sauk.org.uk)

### Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's brace, please contact the physiotherapy team, **phone** 020 7188 4660, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

For more information on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **web** [www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets)

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