

# Your TLSO spinal brace

A guide for patients



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

A thoraco-lumbar sacral orthosis (TLSO) is a spinal brace that is custom made to control the curve of your spine. It can be designed to fasten down the front (1-piece), or down the sides (2-piece).

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

You have been asked to wear a spinal brace to control your spinal posture or to slow down your curve's deterioration as you grow.

## **When you need to wear your brace**

Your spinal consultant (specialist doctor) will tell you how long you need to wear the brace. Usually, if you have a neurodisability or growth rods, you will need to wear the brace during the day when you're sitting, standing or walking. It can be removed for swimming, bathing, during therapy, and at bed time.

If you 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 washing. Children who wear the brace most, have the most benefit.

## How to put your brace on

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

### To apply a 1-piece brace

If you can sit or stand on your own:

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

If you cannot sit without help:

- 1 Sit forward with support.
- 2 Get your parent or carer to wrap the brace around your body, and lie down on your 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 on it. Make sure your waist is lined up with the waist of the brace.
- Put the front half of the brace on top of your 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 your hips, waist and chest. Make sure the strap across the hips is done up firmly so the brace does not slide up.

You should gradually build up how long you wear your brace, to improve your tolerance of it. At first wear it for about 2 hours a day. This should be gradually increased until it is being worn for the prescribed amount of time.

## Skin care

You should check your skin every day after wearing your brace. This is important if you have any changes in your sensation of your skin.

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 physiotherapy team, **phone** 020 7188 4660 to make an appointment to review your brace.

## Special considerations

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

If you have a moulded seat, or supports on either side of your wheelchair, your chair will need a review with your wheelchair service to make sure you can sit comfortably in your brace.

## How to know if you need a new brace

You probably need a new brace if:

- you can get more than 2 fingers underneath the armpit at the top of the brace when your arms are by your side
- you've changed shape
- the brace is loose

Braces normally need to be reviewed every 9 to 12 months after the first fitting, depending on how much you've grown.

Your parents can make an appointment with our orthotics clinic to change your brace. **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 brace, you can 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](http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk)

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