

## Providence/Charleston Scoliosis Orthosis Wear Instructions and Brace Care Guide

### Applying your Orthosis

There are several methods of application. At first you will need help but eventually you will learn to do it yourself. The easiest method is described below:

- Place orthosis around your body by holding each side and spreading the orthosis so you can twist into it. The orthosis is stiff when new, you might need help.
- Position the brace so that the lumbar/waist pad is located in the soft spot just above your hips and below your ribs.
- With brace in place, lie down in bed and determine if lumbar pad is in the correct location. If it is rotated, too high or too low, reposition brace as instructed by your orthotist.
- Pull straps, starting with lower strap, then top and middle. Adjust the straps so the brace is straight.



### Sleeping Position:

You may sleep in any position you feel is comfortable. We recommend lying on your side with a large pillow to lean into. An alternate suggestion is lying on your back with a small pillow under your knees.

### Exercises

If your orthopedic surgeon prescribed physical therapy, your physical therapist will design a customized exercise program based on your needs.

### Skin Care:

- Bathe daily.
- Pay special attention to pink areas of the skin where orthosis pressure is highest.
- Always wear a Brace Shirt or a snug fitting tshirt (without seams) under your orthosis.
- Wear orthosis as tightly as possible. A loose orthosis may rub and cause skin breakdown.
- The use of cornstarch is often helpful in the hot weather. Initially do not use creams, lotions or powders under the orthosis. They often soften the skin. If there is skin breakdown (sore, red, raw skin) the orthosis must not be reapplied until the skin heals (one day or more).
- Sometimes the skin over the waist and hips gets darker. This is common and is not a problem. When the orthosis treatment is complete, the discoloration will fade.

### Cleaning Instructions

- It is important to clean the foam liner of your orthosis daily. The foam will not absorb moisture, however, perspiration will collect on it.
- Our braces can be cleaned with mild soap and water, and air dried. A simple method for cleaning is to hold the brace up to a shower head and rinse with water.
- At least once a week, spray or rub the interior with rubbing alcohol. The rubbing alcohol will disinfect the liner and quickly evaporate.

### **SUCCESSFUL ORTHOSIS WEARING REQUIRES YOU TO:**

- Wear your orthosis 8-10 hours nightly within 4 days (unless otherwise specified by your Doctor).
- Take care of your skin daily.
- Wear a Brace Shirt or a snug fitting t-shirt at all times under your orthosis.
- Properly apply the orthosis to your body.
- Clean your orthosis daily.
- Complete your exercise program daily.

### **Breaking in your Orthosis**

Over a period of 10 days, gradually increase the strap tension in your orthosis. The following program is designed to help your skin and muscles adjust to the orthosis:

#### **10 night break in schedule:**

- Night 1: Wear brace to bed with straps comfortably snug and try to fall asleep. If you can't fall asleep within 1 hour, take the brace off and sleep the rest of the night without it.
- Nights 2-4: Wear the brace with straps tightened slightly and try to fall asleep (this should be a bit easier these nights). If you wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep, remove brace and sleep the rest of the night without it.
- Night 5-10: Gradually increase tension in the straps on the brace each night, aiming to reach the marks which were placed on the straps by your orthotist by the 10<sup>th</sup> night. If you are still having trouble sleeping through the night, please contact your orthotist.

The follow-up care of each patient is specific to the patient's scoliosis and curve pattern, as well his or her ability to return for brace adjustments and follow-up appointments. In general, we prefer the following for patients who live locally:

1. In brace X-ray within two weeks from brace fitting to check brace function.
2. Two Week follow-up of the brace quality. It is important to verify fit and function with in brace x-ray, pad pressure, patient comfort, and correct donning of the brace.
3. Three month follow-up of brace quality. Listen to patient feedback on fit, comfort, and change in height since the fitting.
4. Brace follow-up every three months until a new scoliosis brace is needed.
5. A new brace should be made before the old one doesn't fit due to changes in anatomy or growth.

**As you grow and your body changes, further adjustments will need to be made. If your brace becomes less comfortable, no longer fits, or if at any point you have questions or concerns, please contact your Orthotist or call to schedule an appointment.**