Scoliosis and Kyphosis Brace Wear

Your child's orthopaedic doctor has prescribed a brace to stop your child's spinal curvature from getting worse. The type of brace is called a _____________ brace. Your child is to wear his brace ____________ hours per day. The best chance of preventing your child's curve from getting worse is by wearing the brace faithfully every day.

Your child’s brace will be made and adjusted by a brace maker (orthotist). The brace is made to fit snugly. The brace maker will show you and your child how to correctly put the brace on. As your child grows the brace will be adjusted by the brace maker.

**Weaning into the brace:** Most children will become adjusted to wearing the brace in about three weeks. Your child may try wearing the brace after school until bedtime (4-6 hours) for the first week. Check the skin after the brace has been on the first two hours. Pour rubbing alcohol into your hand and rub it into the skin that will be under the brace. If the skin is pink, put the brace back on for two more hours. Check the skin again after two hours. If the skin is red, keep the brace off for 1/2 hour. At the end of the week, your child should start to wear the brace from after school until morning. Then, it is time to increase the brace wear to full-time. Increase the time by six hours until your child is wearing it full time. This may take one to two weeks.

**Skin care:** The brace should be applied over a cotton tee shirt that fits snugly. A t-shirt (without seams) will help protect your child's skin from rubbing and chafing under the brace. Your child should shower or bathe daily.

After bathing, apply rubbing alcohol to your child's hip bones and where the edges of the brace and brace pads touch the skin. This will toughen the skin and prevent sores. The toughened skin may become darker over time. This will go away after the brace treatment is stopped. A tea bag (steeped until it makes dark tea) can be dabbed over red areas after the brace is removed. This will soothe the reddened areas. Do not use lotions, creams or oils under the brace. This will make the skin soft and irritated. Medicated powder may be used in small amounts to help decrease moisture and chafing. Clean caked powder off the skin to avoid irritation.

**Clothing:** Most styles of clothing will fit over a brace. Loose clothing will hide the outline of the brace. Underpants and slacks will need to be large enough to fit over the lower part of the brace. Your child should try on different size pants over the brace to find out what size works best. Drawstring pants, bib overalls and elastic waistbands work very well. If your child has a Milwaukee brace, turtlenecks and scarves will help to cover up the ring and throat bars.

**Activities:** Your child may continue with most of his usual activities. Physical activity and exercise is important to maintain muscle tone while wearing the brace. Your child may participate in gym class. Activities that must be restricted while wearing the brace include all contact sports (football, hockey, wrestling, basketball). This is to avoid injury to others who may collide into your child's brace. Other activities your child should avoid when wearing the brace include: horseback riding, gymnastics, skiing and skating. These activities are hard to do when wearing a brace and may cause your child to get hurt. Your child may participate in these activities with the brace off. Activities that can be done fairly comfortably once your child has adjusted to his brace include: riding a bicycle, running, jumping, playing tennis, volleyball, golf, and dancing (NO ROUGH PLAY!). Talk to your child's orthopaedic doctor if you have any questions about other activities.
If your child is unable to comfortably participate in gym class with his brace on, you have several options:

1. Arrange to have your child go to the school nurse to assist him with taking off the brace before gym class and putting on the brace afterwards.

2. Obtain a gym excuse from your child's orthopaedic doctor.

3. Request special credit for after school extracurricular activity (softball, swimming) with a YMCA or other community organization to equal credit for gym participation.

Your child may take off his brace for ________ hours each day. Organized sports and activities can be planned when the brace is off to fit your child's schedule.

Brace care: Clean the brace once a week. Remove the brace and wipe the inside of the brace (if it is damp) with rubbing alcohol. Dry thoroughly. Store the brace in a cool dry place. Do not put the brace in a hot place (in a car trunk, near a radiator or in the sun). If your child has a Milwaukee Brace, check and tighten the screws once a week.

Helpful hints: Firm or hard chairs may be more comfortable than soft, low chairs when sitting with the brace on. When traveling in the car, try placing a firm cushion under your child's seat to provide support. If your child has a Milwaukee Brace, sheepskin threaded through and over the ring and throat bars may be more comfortable when he is lying down.

Follow-up: Doctor visits will be scheduled within the first month your child begins wearing his brace and then every four to six months. He will have an x-ray with his brace on at each visit. This is to make sure the brace is doing its job in holding the spinal curvature. Your child's orthopaedic doctor will also check to make sure the brace fits correctly. As your child grows he may need a new brace made. It is very important to keep all your scheduled appointments to make sure your child's curve is not getting worse while wearing the brace.

Call the Orthopaedic Clinic at (816) 234-3075 if:

- Your child is not tolerating his new brace by three weeks.
- You have questions about your child's scoliosis/kyphosis.
- You have questions as to what activities your child can do with his brace.

Call your brace maker ___________________________ if:

- Your child develops sores under his brace.
- Your child's brace cracks, breaks or the straps wear out.
- Your child's brace is not fitting well.