



This sheet gives you instructions for how to wear your Boston brace and how to take care of it.

Key points:

- Wear your brace _____ hours a day. Slowly wear it longer according to your doctor's instructions.
- Take care of your skin daily.
- Always wear a T-shirt under your brace.
- Adjust your brace to your body. The waist pads must be above your hips and below your lowest rib.
- Clean your brace every day with rubbing alcohol.
- Do your exercise program every day.

How do I put my brace on?

At first, you'll need someone to help. You might be able to do it by yourself after a while. Here's the easiest way to put it on:

- Make sure all of the straps are outside the brace.
- Place the brace around your body by holding each side and spreading the brace so you can twist into it. The brace will be stiff if it's new.
- The opening of the brace should be in the center of your back so that the bumps on your spine and the crease between your buttocks are in the middle of the opening.
- Push the brace down by placing hands on your hips. The waist pads on the inside of the brace should rest just above your hips, and below your ribs.
- Lean forward onto your forearms on a surface, like a table, counter or dresser. Your helper should thread the straps through the buckles.
- Your helper should apply pressure with the flat of their hand to the opposite buckle. At the same time, they should pull the Velcro® strap with the other hand toward the hand applying the pressure.
- Secure the bottom strap first, then the top and middle straps. Straighten up.
- There will be several sets of marks on the straps for different amounts of tension. You should work slowly toward using the tightest mark.
- Make sure to smooth your skin and T-shirt to prevent any wrinkles or pressure areas.

How can I put on and tighten the brace myself?

- Place the brace on your body as described.
- Thread the straps through the buckles.
- Lean forward at your hips and pull the straps out, down and away from the buckle side.

How much time do I need to wear the brace?

Over 2-3 weeks, slowly increase the time each day in your brace. This will help your skin and muscles adjust.

Stage 1: Work up wearing the brace 6 hours a day.

- Consider wearing it after school until bedtime.
- Start with 2 hours.
- Remove the brace, check your skin and use cornstarch powder to pink areas if you need to.
- It's normal for skin to look pink. Put the brace back on for 2 more hours. Repeat up to 6 hours total.
- If your skin is sore and red, wait 30 minutes, use cornstarch again and put the brace on for 2 more hours. Repeat up to 6 hours total.
- Don't sleep in your brace in this stage.

Stage 2: Wear the brace 10 hours a day.

- Wear the brace for 4 hours.
- Remove the brace. Check your skin and use cornstarch powder if needed.
- Wear brace for 3 more hours.
- Remove the brace. Check your skin and use cornstarch powder if needed.
- Wear the brace for up to 10 hours total.
- Don't sleep in your brace in this stage.

Stage 3: Wear the brace 18-23 hours a day.

- Once you can wear your brace 8-10 hours during the day without having any issues, you can start sleeping in it. It might take a few tries before you can sleep the entire night in your brace.
- Once you start sleeping in your brace, slowly increase the amount of time you wear it by 2 hours until you get to your recommended total hours.

- Check your skin at least once during the school day. Your school nurse can help. Use cornstarch powder if needed.
- Put the brace back on and take it off after school until bedtime.
- You should now be wearing your brace for _____ hours a day.

How should I care for my skin?

It's very important to keep your skin from breaking down (sores and red, raw skin). Your skin under the brace needs to be toughened and protected, especially where the brace puts the most pressure.

The skin over your waist and hips might get darker. This is common and it's not a problem. This will fade when your brace treatment is over.

Simple ways to protect the skin

- Take a shower or bath every day.
- Always wear a clean, seamless undershirt under your brace.
- Cornstarch-based powder works best to soothe your skin and absorb sweat.
- Pay attention to pink areas of skin where the brace pressure is highest.
- Always wear underwear over the brace to prevent skin breakdown at the site of the elastic band.
- Wear your brace as tightly as possible. Your orthotist will show you how tight the straps need to be pulled.

How should I clean my brace?

It's important to clean the foam liner of your brace every day. The foam liner won't absorb moisture. But it will collect sweat, oil and dirt. Clean the foam with rubbing alcohol. The rubbing alcohol will disinfect the liner and quickly evaporate.

How do I do my physical therapy?

- Your physical therapist will give you 2 sets of exercises.
- The first set of exercises is done when you're not wearing your brace. These exercises keep your back limber and your muscles from getting weak.
- The second set of exercises is done while you're wearing your brace. Do these as much as you can during the day. They help your brace treatment to be more effective.

- Doing both sets of exercises right from the start will make wearing your brace more comfortable.

When is my follow-up visit?

Your first follow-up visit will be 4-6 weeks after picking up your brace. Here's what to do:

- Go to the brace shop first to have them adjust your brace.
- You'll meet with your doctor. They'll check the brace.
- You will have X-rays while you're in the brace. The X-rays will help us see if the brace is working.
- If your follow-up visit isn't at our Boston Children's Hospital or Waltham locations, you may not be able to have your brace shop appointment and doctor's appointment on the same day.
- Be sure to see a doctor or a nurse before having X-rays. They'll make sure that the brace is applied correctly and is tight enough.

Questions?

Please call the nurse triage line at (617) 355-6021, option #3.

Your orthopedic surgeon is:

Your nurse is:

Your orthotist is:

Your physical therapist is:

Boston Children's Hospital offers orthopedic care at locations in Boston, Waltham, Lexington, Peabody and Weymouth, MA.