

Patient Information

Neurosurgery

Halo jacket

The information is based on the experiences of other halo patients and the doctors who are specialists in this area. If there's anything you find that may help other halo wearers, let us know.

The halo jacket holds your neck still. This will allow your bones to heal well after surgery or injury.

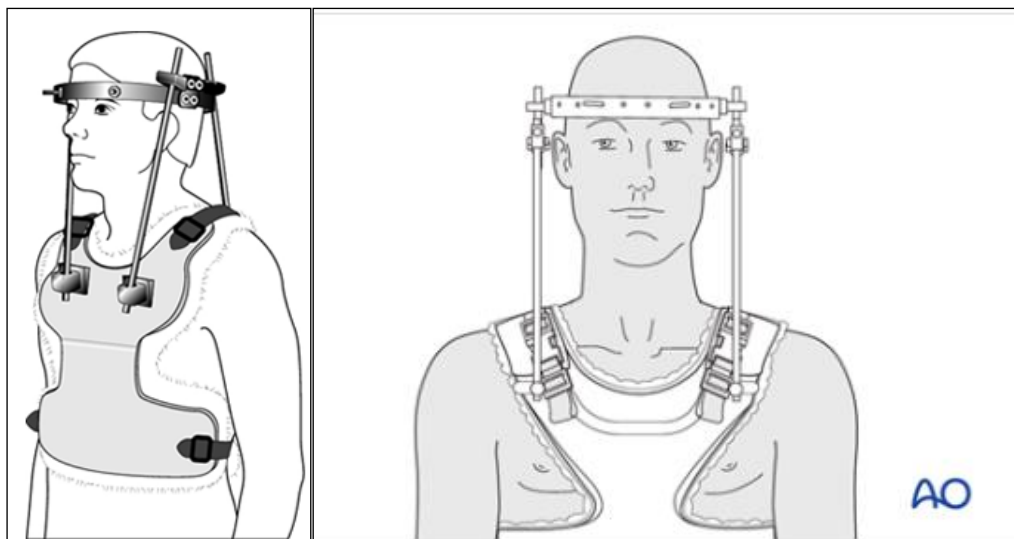


Image 1

Image 2

Images 1 was produced by [UW School of Medicine and Public Health](#) and is reused with their permission.

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Wearing the halo jacket

The halo jacket must stay in place for 24 hours, 7 days a week. You must not remove it.

The halo is usually worn for 3 months. This may vary based on your condition and your consultants' recommendations.

The halo is made of titanium and graphite and is kept in place with four pins. The halo is very strong but it's not heavy to wear. The fleece jacket you wear with the halo cannot be removed unless in an emergency.

It may take a few days to get used to wearing the halo jacket.

Check-ups

Immediately after the halo jacket is fitted, we perform a CT scan or X-ray to check its alignment.

If the pins need tightening, this is done at the assessment 48 hours after the halo jacket is fitted.

You will come back to an outpatient clinic on a weekly or fortnightly basis to check your progress. You will have an X-ray or scan at different intervals. You will also have your securing pins checked for any signs of infection.

Use your clinic time to ask any questions you may have.

Pin site care

Your pins must be checked and cleaned every day by yourself or by a carer. We will show you or your carer how to do this before you go home. If there is no one to check and clean your pins, we'll arrange a district nurse to visit you daily.

Keep the pins and pin sites dry.

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If you think your pin sites are infected is present, contact your GP immediately. The signs of an infection are:

- redness around the site
- signs of weeping
- pain and or tenderness at the pin sites
- loosening of the pins

Wearing in the halo

You should be up and walking around on the same day. Previous patients say it can take a couple of days to get used to wearing your halo jacket. It's not heavy, but you may feel a bit off balance at first.

Your line of vision will be restricted. You will also be unable to look down at your feet. So you need to be careful that you do not trip and fall. Be patient with yourself in this period of change.

To avoid falls:

- bend at the knees to reach down rather than at the waist
- wear comfortable, flat shoes
- avoid alcohol

Do not:

- × Do not drive while wearing your halo – the halo restricts your vision.
- × Do not do any heavy lifting or strenuous exercise.

You can still be a passenger in a car. But be careful getting in and out to make sure your halo is not knocked.

Going out

You can still get out and about and remain active. There are no limits on this as long as you feel up to it.

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Previous patients, when they felt comfortable and confident to do so, have done activities such as shopping.

Clothes

Whilst wearing the halo jacket, your usual clothing for your top half will no longer fit. Previous patients say to get tops, shirts or blouses that are at least two sizes bigger than your usual size. Clothing with zips or buttons, such as shirts and blouses, are easier to put on and take off.

Avoid wearing T-shirts or other clothing that is usually put on over the head. These will not fit over the frame.

Wear flat, comfortable shoes or boots.

Hygiene

You need to keep your jacket liner dry.

When washing, **do not shower**. Have a shallow bath or strip wash instead. Beware of shower rails and curtains when getting in and out of the bath.

If the jacket liner gets wet, dry it with a hair dryer on a cool setting.

You can use a dry shampoo to wash your hair so the pin sites do not get wet. Dry shampoo is available in most supermarkets. It's easier to ask somebody to help you apply the dry shampoo.

Sleep

This may take some time to get used to. Use extra pillows for support.

To get out of bed, roll onto your side and drop your legs over the edge of the bed.

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General advice

Although you need to learn to do as much as possible for yourself, it's more important to ask for help when you need it. One of the most important things to avoid is falling.

Avoid receiving bumps and jars to the halo. So avoid very busy, crowded places.

Contact the Neurosurgical Unit if you experience:

- Sudden neck pain, temperature, photophobia (unable to stand bright lights), neck rigidity
- Excessive difficulty in eating
- Numbness or weakness in your arms or legs
- Pain, heat, and weeping at the pin sites
- Fever
- Loosening of pin sites or the whole halo apparatus

Pin loosening

If you feel any unusual pain, hear a clicking noise, or notice any fluid discharge at a pin site, contact the Neurosurgical Unit immediately and avoid any excessive movement.

Contact details

Neurosurgical Unit,

Ward 43

4th Floor Central

University Hospital

Coventry

CV2 2 DX

Tel: 024 7696 5335 or 024 7696 5329

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More information

If you have any more questions, please ask the staff who are caring for you or contact Ward 43 on 0241 6365 230.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 8240 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

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Document History

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