

## Orthotics

# A Guide to your Ankle Foot Orthosis

### Introduction

You have been provided with an ankle-foot orthosis (or AFO), which has been selected to meet your individual needs.

The AFO aims to make standing and walking easier by:

- Controlling foot and ankle position
- Accommodating a fixed-joint position
- Compensating for muscle weakness
- Reducing pain

The AFO is intended to be used solely by you. As the device is directly influencing your joint positions, it may feel strange or uncomfortable when you begin to use it. This should ease as you gradually wear in the AFO.

The AFO is designed to work with a shoe so you should not wear the AFO without footwear.

### Wear time

You should gradually increase the wear time with your AFO to allow your skin to adjust to the corrective pressures being applied.

- Day 1 Up to 1 Hour
- Day 2 1-2 Hours
- Day 3 2-3 Hours



## Patient Information

- Day 4 3-4 Hours
- Day 5 4-5 Hours
- Day 6 5-6 Hours
- Day 7 6-8 Hours

If your AFO becomes uncomfortable, discontinue use and then seek advice from the Orthotics department.

## Footwear

**Do not wear your AFO without footwear, unless you have been told to do so by your Orthotist**

When selecting shoes to wear with your AFO, look for the following features:

- Enclosed heel and toe
- Secure lace or velcro fastening
- Removable insole
- Heel height recommended by your Orthotist

It is important to select supportive shoes which are comfortable to maximise the benefits of the AFO.

## Skin Care

It is advised that you wear a sock with your AFO to reduce any friction applied to your skin.

Each time you remove your AFO you should **check your skin for any signs of marking or redness**. If red marks persist for longer than 30 minutes or if the skin breaks down, discontinue use of the AFO and seek a review with your Orthotist.

**It is particularly important to check your skin daily if you have reduced sensation.**

**There is always a risk of pressure and rubbing when wearing an AFO.**

## Patient Information

### **Caring for your AFO**

You can clean your AFO with a damp cloth and dry with a towel. Do not dry over sources of heat as this may deform the plastic. Check the AFO material regularly for any cracks or signs of wear and tear. Repairs can be made to the AFO, such as strap and padding replacements.

If your AFO has ankle joints, be sure to check the integrity of the joints and screws each time you use the AFO. **Do not attempt repairs yourself;** contact the Orthotics department for review.

### **Review**

Following the first fitting of your AFO, your Orthotist may schedule a review appointment to discuss your progress and carry out any necessary adjustments.

The Orthotist will also check the safety of the AFO and that it still meets your requirements.

**You should contact the Orthotics department for a review if there are any issues regarding the fit, function or integrity of your AFO.**

### **Further Information**

If you have more questions or require any further information, please contact the Surgical Appliances department using the details below.

#### **Coventry**

Surgical Appliances Department  
University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire  
Clifford Bridge Road  
Walsgrave  
Coventry  
CV2 2DX  
Telephone number: 02476 966035

#### **Opening Times**

Monday–Thursday 08:30–16:30  
Friday 08:00 – 16:00  
Closed Bank Holidays

## Patient Information

### **Rugby**

Surgical Appliances Department

Rugby St Cross Hospital

Barby Road

Rugby

CV22 5PX

Telephone number: 01788 572831

### **Opening Times**

Monday–Wednesday 08:30–16:30

Closed Bank Holidays

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 02476 966035 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

#### **Document History**

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