

## Orthopaedics

# Knee ankle foot orthosis

We provided you with a knee-ankle-foot orthosis (or KAFO). This is designed to meet your individual needs.

KAFOs compensate for lower limb instability caused by muscle weakness, paralysis, or skeletal problems. The orthosis aims to make standing and walking easier by:

- controlling joint instability
- preventing excessive joint motion
- improving joint alignment
- reducing joint pain

KAFOs are complex devices. Their designs vary to suit each individual. There are two main types:

- Conventional KAFO – these have side steels that insert into the heel of a shoe with a leather thigh section and calf band.
- Cosmetic KAFO – these have moulded thigh and calf sections which fit inside a shoe, connected by metal side bars.

The risk of falls is higher than usual when using your KAFO. Be mindful of your surroundings.

Using a KAFO puts a large demand on your body. This may cause premature wear and tear in your joints. Common side effects can be:

- lower back pain



## Patient Information

- pain in the joints of the unaffected leg
- additional pressure rubbing to skin

## Wear time

Gradually increase the time you spend wearing your KAFO. This allows your skin to adjust to the supportive pressures which the KAFO applies.

Begin by using your KAFO in a safe, indoor environment. Your clinician will tell you when and how long to wear your KAFO for.

If your KAFO becomes uncomfortable and/or causes skin break down/blisters, stop using it and seek advice from the Orthotics Department. Wear long socks with your KAFO to reduce the amount of friction on your skin.

Check your skin each time you use your KAFO to make sure there's no skin break down or reduced sensation.

## Footwear

Wear your KAFO with footwear at all times. Your KAFO may be supplied with footwear. But this is not always the case.

When selecting shoes to wear with your KAFO, select supportive comfortable shoes to maximise the benefits of the KAFO. Look for shoes that have:

- an enclosed heel and toe
- secure lace or Velcro fastening
- a removable insole
- a heel height recommended by your orthotist
- a stiff sole and heel unit.

## Patient Information

### **Caring for your KAFO**

Clean your KAFO with a damp cloth and dry with a towel. Do not dry your KAFO over sources of heat, as this may deform the plastic.

Check the KAFO material regularly for any cracks or signs of wear and tear. Check the joints and rivets for wear and tear.

Do not attempt repairs yourself. Contact the Orthotics Department to arrange for the repair of your KAFO.

### **Putting your KAFO on**

You can put your KAFO on when sitting or lying down. Your clinician will advise you of the best way to put it on.

Make sure you fasten all straps on your KAFO and footwear securely.

If your KAFO has knee joint locks, lock these before bearing weight through the KAFO. You should hear a 'click' when you straighten your leg to lock the joints, but check these manually.

### **More information**

If you would like any more information, please contact the Orthotic Department.

### **Contact details**

#### **Coventry**

Orthotics/ Surgical Appliances Department

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Coventry

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## Patient Information

Telephone number: 024 7696 6035

### Opening Times

Monday to Thursday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

Friday, 8am to 4pm

Closed Bank Holidays

## Rugby

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