

## A Schedule for Wearing Your Brace

Gradually increase the amount of time you wear your brace each day over the course of three days until you wear it full-time during the day. Follow the program below to help your skin and muscles adjust to having the brace on.

**Day 1:** Wear your brace for up to two hours ON followed by one hour OFF for a total wearing time of 6 hours.

**Day 2:** Wear your brace for up 4 hours. Remove the brace and check your skin. If your skin is just pink, re-apply the brace for 4 more hours for a total wearing time of 8 hours.

**Day 3:** Wear your brace for up to 4 hours, removing it to check your skin. Put the brace back on and repeat twice for a total wearing time of 12 hours.

**Q: My child's foot pulls up on the Velcro™ strap. Is this normal?**

**A:** Yes. Spasticity causes the muscles to contract pulling up against the strap. The strap is intended to hold the foot down in the AFO. If skin discoloration under the strap lasts longer than 60 minutes, call Braceworks.

**Q: How can I tell when my child is out-growing the AFO?**

**A:** Signs that your child is outgrowing their AFO include complaints of pain or you notice red marks beginning to appear where they haven't previously been seen. Other signs include toes extending beyond the end of the foot section of the AFO. Call Braceworks to make an appointment so that we can determine if the brace can be adjusted to extend the life of the brace or a new one is required.

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## Our Orthotists

We thrive on the clinical challenges of helping children to be as active and independent as possible. We provide continuity of care from childhood to youth throughout their transition into adulthood.

### Marc Schneider, BPE

Marc has been specializing in pediatrics in Calgary since 1989 when he joined the Alberta Children's Hospital. He practiced there until 1996 when he co-founded Braceworks. Marc is the longest serving pediatric orthotist in Calgary.

### Steven Yaskiw, BSc

Steve brings over 5 years of solid experience to our clinical team. His experience includes the full spectrum of upper limb, lower limb and spinal bracing for acute and chronic neuromuscular-skeletal conditions.

### Christopher Johnstone, BSc

Chris developed his interest in pediatrics as a student at the National Centre for Prosthetics and Orthotics, University of Strathclyde in his home town of Glasgow, Scotland.

## Fees

Orthotics are a cost-shared benefit covered by Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) under Alberta Seniors and Community Supports. Community-based providers like Braceworks deliver this publicly-funded service for the exact same fees as hospital-based providers. You are free to choose your provider from among any AADL authorized Vendors ([www.seniors.alberta.ca/aadl/AV/manual/PDF/46a\\_orthotics\\_vendor\\_list.pdf](http://www.seniors.alberta.ca/aadl/AV/manual/PDF/46a_orthotics_vendor_list.pdf)). Cost is not a barrier. Exercise your options. Choose the provider whose services meet your needs.

# Braceworks Wear & Care Guide for Your Brace

Questions?

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## Your Child's New AFOs

Your child should wear their Ankle-Foot Orthotics (AFOs) during the day with their shoes. Walking barefoot after a bath or in the evening will not do any harm.

Your child may feel uncomfortable wearing the brace during the initial adjustment period which may last up to a few weeks. During this period, encourage your child to wear their brace as much as possible to become acquainted with it. The brace should feel more natural and comfortable. However, if your child complains about the AFO or you see red marks, please call Braceworks to have the fit checked and adjusted if required.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: How do I apply and tighten my child's brace?

1. Hold the foot at or beyond 90 degrees.
2. Place the foot firmly into the heel pocket of the AFO.
3. Secure the ankle strap.
4. Secure the shin strap.
5. Fit the footwear over the AFO.
6. Prevent skin problems from occurring with your new brace by following "A Schedule for Wearing Your Brace".
7. Always check your child's foot and lower leg for any areas of redness when you remove the brace.
8. If dark red areas do not diminish within 30 minutes of removing the brace, please call Braceworks.

### Q: How do I clean my brace?

**A:** Clean your brace frequently with soap and water and allow it to air dry. Sanitize regularly with rubbing alcohol. Do not use a hair dryer as the heat will melt the hook and loop of the Velcro™ straps.

### Q: When should I call Braceworks to have my brace adjusted?

**A:** You're welcome to call Braceworks with questions or concerns at any time. Certainly, if you notice dark red marks on your child's skin that last longer than 30 minutes after removing the brace, then mark the spot on the brace with a red pen and call Braceworks.

### Q: Do I need to make an appointment for minor repairs to replace Velcro™ straps, rivets and hinges?

**A:** Please call ahead so we can make arrangements for our Technician to service the brace promptly within a couple of days. Your child's attendance is not required.

### Q: I travel to Calgary to attend Clinics at the Alberta Children's Hospital. If they recommend adjustments to the brace, is it possible for me to visit Braceworks on the same day?

**A:** Yes. Please call ahead from the Clinic as soon as possible so we can accommodate you the same day.

### Q: How tight should the brace be?

**A:** The heel should be securely held in the brace with no "give" or movement. Wear your brace as tightly as possible. It should not be painful. A loose brace will cause rubbing and lead to skin problems.

## Protecting Your Skin

It is very important to prevent skin breakdown (i.e., sore, dark red skin). The skin under the brace will eventually toughen up, especially where the brace presses the hardest, over 2 to 3 weeks. Do not use creams or lotions under the brace initially because these products tend to soften the skin and can lead to skin breakdown. A light dusting of cornstarch may help reduce moisture due to perspiration in hot weather.

Pay special attention to pink areas of the skin where your brace presses the most. The pink color is normal and should disappear within 30 minutes of removing the brace. If the skin remains pink longer than 30 minutes, the brace may need to be adjusted. If there is skin breakdown (sore, red, raw skin) discontinue wearing the brace while continuing to bathe the area daily until the skin heals. This usually takes several days. Please call Braceworks to make an appointment to re-assess the fit of the brace.

### Q: What are the best socks to wear with AFOs?

**A:** Choose knee socks that fit smoothly, conforming to the foot and providing protection from pressure, bunching, binding and tightness. Avoid products with inside seams or irritating ridges that can lead to skin breakdown. Soft combed cotton with stretch are comfortable. You'll find products for Preschool aged children at Gap for Kids. Wal-mart, Zellers and www.wearit.ca offer a good selection of socks for older children.