North Cheshire and Mersey
NHS Foundation Trust

Children's ankle foot orthoses (AFOs)

Orthotics

Information for patients and carers

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Caring for you

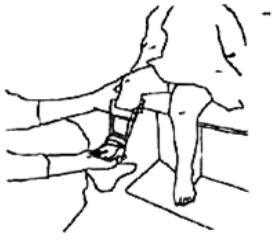
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Introduction

This leaflet is for parents, carers, or guardians whose child has been given an orthosis (a medical device to support, align or improve the function or part of the body).

An ankle foot orthosis (AFO) is a close-fitting plastic support that goes into the shoe to control the position of the foot and / or ankle. This is a general guide and does not replace the specific advice provided by your orthotist.

Fitting instructions

Sit your child in front of you. Open up all the straps and fasten them out of the way. Pull up your child's socks and make sure there are no wrinkles.	
Turn your child's foot towards the middle before bringing the foot up.	
Place your child's heel at the back of the AFO. Make sure the heel is firmly down before fastening the ankle strap, then fasten the ankle strap snugly.	
Fasten the top strap and put on your child's shoe. If there are additional straps, your orthotist will show you how to fasten them.	

Straps should be secure but not overly tight. Loose AFOs rub more often than tight AFOs.

Finally, work the shoe onto the foot with a twisting motion and make sure you tie shoes securely.

It is recommended to use long, plain cotton socks with no pattern.

Make sure they are smooth and wrinkle free.

Never let a child walk in a splint that does not have a non-slip base without shoes on. The plastic on the bottom can be very slippery. We may be able to add non-slip bases to the AFOs if needed.

Wearing regime

The orthosis should not hurt but it may feel a little uncomfortable while your child gets used to it.

Whether this is their first or a replacement AFO, you should build up the wearing time gradually. If possible, wear regularly for short periods throughout the day.

Any rubbing or red marks should fade away after 30 minutes of removing the orthosis.

If marks do not fade, please contact the Orthotics Department for a review appointment and leave the orthosis off, if safe to do so.

Maintenance and repairs

Due to the intimate fit of the AFO, it is very difficult to keep it completely clean.

Please follow the cleaning instructions:

- Never immerse in water.
- Clean plastic and foam parts with a warm, soapy cloth and dry,
- Leather components should not be cleaned.
- If the orthosis becomes wet allow it to air-dry fully and do not wear it until it is dry.

Do not:

- put the orthosis in water
- place on a heat source
- clean leather parts
- attempt to alter, cut or modify in any way

If the orthosis needs repairing, please contact the Orthotics Department.

You do not need an appointment or a referral for simple repairs.

Repairs usually take around 2 to 3 weeks. We will contact you when the orthosis is ready for collection.

Children are entitled to one pair of AFOs at any one time, or one AFO if they wear it on just one leg. These will be replaced as they grow.

Contact details

Orthotics Department

North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust

Tel: 01925 662446

Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm