

# Fitting Ankle Splints

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**This leaflet contains information for parents and carers about Splints/AFOs (ankle foot orthoses)**

## Why wear ankle splints?

Splints are specially made to fit the child's needs and are designed to provide support and protection.

They can:-

- Aid walking pattern/efficiency
- Promote good ankle/foot position and prevent deformity
- Provide a stretch to tight muscles/help to prevent permanent shortening of muscles
- Help with muscle stiffness (increased muscle tone).

Splints may need to be adjusted over time: **When a splint becomes too small or too tight please contact the Orthotics Department, Tel. 01493 452330.**

## How long should splints be worn for?

Initially, the splints should be worn for one hour a day, increasing gradually: Build up the amount of time they wear it each day until it is comfortable. Ideally splints should be worn every day during waking hours; especially when out and about, walking and carrying out physical activities. However, the therapist will give specific information to suit the child's needs. **It is very important to follow the therapist's advice.**

## Should the splint/s hurt?

No. If the splint hurts or causes discomfort please remove and re-apply.

It is normal for there to be some red marks on the skin when a splint is removed, it may be where the straps have been fastened or due to pressure. The red areas should disappear after 20-30 minutes. It is normal to build up a little hard skin providing it is not excessive. It is very important to check the skin regularly. If your child's skin blisters or there is any swelling or pain, stop wearing the splint/s immediately and contact the Orthotics Department.

## How to look after splint's?

Wipe clean with a damp cloth using warm water and mild detergent and towel dry. Keep away from direct heat and do not immerse in water. Keep away from pets. If the straps become worn or break please contact the Orthotics Department for repair.

## Putting on your child's splint/s?



### Get the leg ready

- Ideally put on a knee-high, plain cotton sock. **Smooth out any wrinkles.**
- Ideally, with the child seated, bend the hip and knee.
- Stretch the ankle muscle by cupping the heel and pushing up at the ball of the foot near the toes.

	<p><b>Place the foot in the splint</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With one hand, hold the foot to keep the knee and ankle bent at a 90° angle.</li> <li>• With the other hand, hold the splint (cup the heel) with the straps open.</li> <li>• Start with the heel firmly touching the footplate of the splint and the foot in the correct position.</li> <li>• Slide the heel down and all the way back into the splint.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Fasten the straps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep the heel firmly in the splint using your thumb.</li> <li>• Thread the ankle strap through the loop and fasten it securely. It is important that this strap is tight or the foot will move in the splint.</li> <li>• Fasten the top strap comfortably.</li> <li>• Adjust the sock under the straps to remove any creases.</li> <li>• The splint should always be used in a shoe.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Check the splint's</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The sock has no wrinkles.</li> <li>✓ The straps are secure.</li> <li>✓ There is no space behind or under the heel.</li> <li>✓ The tips of the toes are inside the edge of the footplate.</li> </ul> <p><b>Splints must pass all these checks to be comfortable and prevent pressure or irritation to the skin.</b> If there are any problems remove the splint and start again. If it is still not right please contact their therapist for advice.</p>

If you have any questions please contact:-

**Newberry Child Development Centre, Lowestoft Road, Gorleston-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR31 6SQ, 01493 442322, between 08:30 and 16:30 Monday to Friday.**

### Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

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**IN TRAN** communication for all  
The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

**For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240**