
What are KAFO, AFO and SMO braces?

- KAFO stands for knee-ankle-foot orthosis. It is a brace that helps keep the leg stable from the foot to the hip.
- AFO stands for ankle-foot orthosis. It is a brace that helps keep the leg stable from the foot to the knee.
- SMO stands for supramalleolar orthosis. It is a brace that helps keep the foot and ankle stable.
- All of these braces must be ordered by a doctor.

Who will treat my child?

An orthotist will treat your child. Orthotists measure, design and fit braces.

How do the braces work?

Each brace is custom made to help keep your child's foot or leg stable. The braces also help protect or prevent leg injuries or deformities.

What can I do to help prepare my child?

Tell your child that:

- A member of the care team will measure their foot or leg for the brace.
- A member of the care team may make a cast model of their foot or leg.
- The brace may feel different or strange at first but will get better with time.

What kind of sock should my child wear under the brace?

Have your child wear a clean, medium-weight synthetic or cotton sock. The sock:

- Should go higher than the height of the brace.
- Must not have any added designs that could cause too much pressure on the skin.

What type of shoe should my child wear?

- A well-made leather oxford or tennis shoe works best. The shoe may be new or gently used.
- You may need a larger shoe size than normal. Make sure the shoe is not so long that it affects how well your child can walk.
 - Try the shoes on while your child is wearing the brace.
 - The shoe should have **only** 1/4 inch to 3/8 inch between the end of your child's toes with the brace on and the end of the shoe.
 - The shoe should also be wide and deep enough to prevent crowding the top part of the foot. You may want to remove the padded insole of the shoe for more depth.
- Use a shoe with laces. Some Velcro shoes do not have long enough Velcro straps.
- The heel height of the shoe will affect how stable your child is when they stand and walk.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

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- A higher heel can push the leg forward and put more pressure on the toes.
- A lower heel can push the leg backward and put more pressure on the heel.
- Ask your child’s orthotist about which heel height is right for your child.
- Some shoes are specially made to use with braces. They have extra depth for children who are hard-to-fit.
- The Children’s Orthotics department does not advise for any 1 brand of shoes. Talk with your child’s orthotist about some options that are right for your child and where to buy them. Some options may include:
 - Keen
 - Merrell
 - Pedro
 - Answer 2
 - New Balance
 - Tsukihoshi
 - Stride Rite
- Please talk with your child’s orthotist if you have a hard time finding shoes.
- Your child’s orthotist can show you how to put the shoes on over the braces to help prevent damage to the shoes or to your child’s skin.

How do I use the brace?

Talk with your child’s doctor and orthotist about how to put on your child’s brace. Some guidelines are listed below.

How to put on the brace

- Put on a dry, clean sock as advised above. Your child’s leg may sweat a lot when they wear the brace. If so, you may put a small amount of unscented (no smell) powder on their leg before you put on the sock.
- Place your child’s foot in the brace. Make sure their heel is all the way back and down in the brace. Bending the hip and knee often helps.
- Tighten the ankle strap. The strap should be just tight enough to keep the heel from moving up and down in the brace.
- Tighten the other straps going up the leg.

Clean the brace each day

- Each day, dampen a washcloth with rubbing alcohol and clean the brace.
- Do not cover the brace with water. This may damage the brace or cause germs to grow.

Wear schedule

- At first, your child should wear the new brace for 1 hour. Check your child’s skin. Increase wear time (as they can handle it) over 1 week.
- Work up to wearing the brace for as long as the orthotist advises.

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When should I call Orthotics?

- Call Orthotics if your child has skin problems or if the brace does not fit well. Please ask for a visit for that day or the next business day.
 - To make a visit, please see the phone numbers listed below.
 - On weekends or holidays, have your child wear the brace as they can. Then call the next business day.
- Signs of skin problems may include:
 - Redness that does not fade after 30 minutes.
 - White areas or blisters.
 - Hard skin or calluses.
- Call Orthotics if you have any questions or problems with your child’s brace.
 - Call if you have any concerns about how the brace fits.
 - The fit may change due to your child’s growth or other physical changes.
 - If your child needs a new brace, the doctor will need to write a new prescription.

How do I reach Orthotics?

Orthotics addresses are listed below. To reach Orthotics by phone, please call 404-785-3229.

5445 Meridian Mark Road NE
Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30342

605 Big Shanty Road NW
Kennesaw, GA 30144

2270 Duluth Hwy. 120
Suite 200
Duluth, GA 30097

1265 Highway 54 West
Suite 200
Fayetteville, GA 30214

410 Peachtree Parkway
The Collection at Forsyth
Suite 300
Cumming, GA 30041

2174 North Druid Hills Road NE
Suite 601
Atlanta, GA 30329

3300 Old Milton Parkway
Suite 370
Alpharetta, GA 30005

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child’s doctor or a member of your child’s healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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