

Information for patients

Ankle Foot Orthoses



RJAH
Orthotics

Ankle Foot Orthoses (AFOs)

AFOs are prescribed for a number of reasons, including:

- To realign and control the ankle and foot joints.
- To provide support to weakened or weakening joints
- To limit or stop abnormal motion
- To provide protection
- To help control abnormal muscle tone

Your AFO is designed to provide support and comfort, and improve your walking pattern. It is prescribed and manufactured for your specific needs. Most AFOs are made of polypropylene plastic of varying thicknesses; some may be made of alternative types of plastic or other materials such as carbon fibre and may have artificial ankle joints. Your AFO will usually fit along the back of your leg around your ankle and under your foot. It is held on with hook and loop fastening straps. AFOs are close fitting to ensure control.

Wearing your AFO

You need to give yourself time to get used to your AFO. Build up the amount of time you wear it each day until it is comfortable.

Once it has been broken in you should aim to wear it as much as possible to ensure control and support.

Caution!

It is normal for there to be some red marking of the skin when you take off your AFO. Often it is where the straps have been fastened. This should disappear within half an hour or so. It is also normal to build up a little hard skin, especially on the foot. So long as this is not excessive it is nothing to worry about. It is especially important to check your skin regularly if you have altered sensation.

If there are persistent red marks or blistering, discontinue wearing your AFO until you have contacted the department for advice.

Fitting

When putting on your AFO ensure your heel is right to the back and bottom of the device. The straps should be pulled snug to ensure the AFO does not move around, but not so tight that they are uncomfortable. Wearing a long cotton sock under the AFO will usually make it more comfortable.

Footwear

Your AFO should always be used in a shoe, ensure it is positioned at the back of your footwear when putting it on. Your AFO should preferably be worn in footwear with a fastening, i.e. lace or hook and loop fastening. This will improve control by helping to hold your foot onto the orthosis. The lower down the tongue of the shoe the easier it will be to put over the AFO. Most footwear has removable inlays; these can be taken out and replaced with your AFO should you need extra depth and room to accommodate the device.

Take your AFO with you when you are buying new shoes. If your AFO will not fit into your shoes you may need to go for half or a whole size bigger. Footwear should not have a heel more than approximately two and a half centimetres (one inch.)

Care

Please keep your AFO well maintained:

- You can clean it with a damp cloth and towel dry.
- Keep it away from direct heat and radiators
- Keep it away from pets
- If the hook and loop fastening straps or lining of your orthosis become worn drop it into the Orthotic department for repair
- Please do not try to adapt the orthosis yourself
- Your AFO has been prescribed for you and shouldn't be given to anyone else as this could cause them problems.

Should you have any queries regarding your AFO please do not hesitate to contact us. We provide the clinical service for orthotics at The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, Oswestry, The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and The Princess Royal Hospital, Telford. Please find the relevant contact details below.

Please only contact the department where you are due to have an appointment or have already been seen, other sites will not be able to deal with your enquiry and you will be asked to ring the appropriate hospital.

The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital / Tel: 01691 404442

Below are the opening times for the department for dropping off/collecting footwear and appliances.

RECEPTION OPENING TIMES

Monday – Thursday, 8.15am – 5pm

Friday, 8.15am – 4.45pm

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Monday – Thursday, 8.45am – 5pm

Friday, 8.45am – 4pm

The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital / Tel: 01743 261000 Ext: 3701

Monday – Thursday, 9am – 4pm

Friday, 8.30am – 3pm

The Princess Royal Hospital / Tel: 01952 641222 Ext: 4224

Monday – Thursday, 9am – 4pm

Friday, 9am – 12.30pm

ALL SITES ARE CLOSED FOR LUNCH 12.30PM – 1.15PM

Please note we are only able to offer appointments at the site you have been referred to by your consultant/G.P. even if this isn't the most local to your home address.

If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print. Arrangements can also be made on request for it to be explained in your preferred language. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

Feedback

Tell us what you think of our patient information leaflet.
Please send your comments to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

Please note that any device supplied by the Orthotics Department is property of the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and should be returned to the department upon the end of its use unless advised otherwise. Do not dispose of any devices until they have been inspected by a member of the Orthotics team, or unless you have been informed to do so by a member of the team. In the event of loss or damage beyond expected wear, you may be asked to pay a replacement fee.

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