

# Back Brace: What You Need To Know

## Back Brace

You need to wear a back brace to protect and support your spine. The brace will keep you from movements that could re-injure your back, such as twisting, bending or lifting.

Your brace will be fitted just for your body. It will fit tightly over your back, chest and hips (similar to how a cast would fit). The plastic molded brace will have holes so air can move through it to keep you cool.

## Wearing the Back Brace

Keeping your spine in proper alignment is important to your recovery. Your doctor will give you a schedule. In general, you can expect to wear the back brace for three months.

Wear the back brace when you are up and out of bed. You *may* not need to wear the back brace when you are lying down or sleeping. Follow your doctor's directions.

## Putting On the Back Brace

You will need to be lying down at all times when your brace is off unless you receive other directions from your doctor.

To put the back brace on:

- While lying down on your bed, place the brace beside you.
- Do a logroll from side to side into the brace. Make sure the waist grooves are in the right position.

— To do a logroll:

- Bend your right knee and put your right arm across your chest.
- Roll all in one movement to your left.
- Reverse this for rolling to the right.

— Be sure to move as one unit. Do not twist, turn or bend your body.

- Secure the straps. Start with the middle strap. Make sure the brace does not twist as you secure the straps.
- To get out of bed, roll to one side. Let your legs dangle over the side of the bed. Push yourself up with your arms. Make sure the brace does not twist or move.

## Taking Off the Back Brace

You will need to lie flat while your brace is off, unless you receive other directions from your doctor.

To remove the brace:

- Lie down on your bed.
- Loosen all Velcro® straps.
- Do a logroll (see the previous section) from side to side while you slide the brace out from underneath your body.
- Be sure to stay flat while your brace is off.

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## Caring for Your Skin

- Check your skin every day. Look for sores or red marks.
- Keep your skin clean and dry.
- Take a shower with the brace on. Follow these directions:
  - Lie down and remove the brace and your clothing.
  - While lying, put the brace back on.
  - Wearing the brace, you may get out of bed and take a shower.
  - Dry yourself and the brace well.
  - Lie flat on your bed and remove the brace. Dry yourself and brace as needed.
  - Put your clothes on while lying flat.
  - Replace the brace while logrolling.
  - Wear a cotton T-shirt that covers your skin under the brace. Make sure the T-shirt has no wrinkles. Keep it dry.
- Do not use lotions, powders, oils and ointments. If you cannot avoid it, only use a little amount and let it dry well before putting on the brace.
- Do not use anything to scratch under the brace. This may break the skin and cause an infection. To relieve itching under the brace, you may aim a hairdryer (on the “cool” setting) at the cast openings. If itching continues, call your doctor.

## Cleaning Your Back Brace

Clean your brace as needed. Use a mild soap and water. Be sure to dry the brace well before wearing it again or let it air dry while you lie down. If you have a stain, you may clean it with rubbing alcohol.

## When To Call Your Regular Doctor

Call your doctor if you have sudden, severe back pain or if you feel numbness or tingling in your arms or legs.

## When To Call Your Orthotist

The orthotist will help you if you are having problems with the back brace. It is important that you don't try to fix or change the brace. You can cause further damage to your back.

Call your orthotist if:

- you have red areas or pressure sores from the brace (caused by pressure or rubbing on your skin)
- the brace is too tight or too loose due to weight gain or loss
- the Velcro® straps no longer work
- you have questions or concerns.