

# Bracing for Scoliosis

## Steps to take:

1. Call one of the orthotic companies listed in the FAQ section
2. Bring the prescription your doctor gave you for a 'custom brace' to the orthotist
3. We will want to see you back in the clinic approximately **ONE MONTH** after you start wearing the brace for 'in brace' x-rays. **Call once you know the date you will get the brace** so the surgeon's office has time to find an appointment time for you.
4. After this, you will only get x-rays out of your brace. The only time you will need another in brace x-ray is if you get a new brace.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Why did my doctor prescribe a brace?

Bracing has been shown to be helpful in preventing curve progression. Your doctor has likely prescribed a brace because you have growth left, and curves tend to worsen when you grow. Bracing is typically recommended if your curve is between 25-40 degrees, you are at a Risser growth stage of 0-2 and for females that are less than one year post menarche. They may also take an x-ray of your hand to look at how mature your bones are.

The brace is custom molded to you and is made of thin plastic. It is worn under your clothing.

### Where can I get a brace?

Your doctor will give you a prescription for a 'custom brace'. Bring this prescription to an orthotist and they will make you a brace that is custom molded for you!

- Orthodynamics: 2810 Grandview Hwy, Vancouver, BC, V5M 2C9.
  - Phone: 604-454-1177, Fax: 604-454-1175, email: [info@orthodynamics.ca](mailto:info@orthodynamics.ca)
- Hodgson Orthopedic Group: Unit 113-250 Schoolhouse Street, Coquitlam, BC, V3K 6V7
  - Phone: 604-520-7332, Fax: 604-521-7300
- Ortho Design Inc: 109A-1960 Springfield Road, Kelowna, BC, V1Y 5V7
  - Phone: 778-478-7014, email: [info@orthodesignbc.com](mailto:info@orthodesignbc.com)



## **How often will I wear the brace?**

Your orthotist will work with you to create a schedule to slowly start wearing the brace (wean into the brace). Once you are up to wearing the brace 'full time' you will be wearing it for 16-20 hours a day. This is the amount of time that research has shown to be effective to treat your scoliosis. You should take the brace off for bathing and exercise.

## **When can I stop wearing the brace?**

Your doctor will look at a number of different factors including: the maturity of your bones (your Risser score and/or your hand x-ray), how long a female has had their monthly cycles, and how much you have grown between appointments. We measure your height at each appointment so we can see how much you have grown each time you see us. Once you have very little growth remaining, the surgeon will ask you to take the brace off.

## **Should I still exercise or do physiotherapy while I am bracing?**

Yes! Exercise and keeping your muscles healthy and strong will still be very important. Sometimes when people take the brace off they will need to exercise a little more because their muscles are sore.

## **How much does the brace cost?**

PharmaCare and extended health coverage (Blue Cross, Sunlife etc.) will cover a portion of the brace depending on your income and the extended health plan you have. There are also a number of other funding sources available. Your orthotist should be able to work with you to help you navigate the available resources. Even with funding the brace can cost between hundreds to a few thousand dollars.

## **Will bracing improve my curve?**

There is always a chance that your curve could improve with bracing. However, bracing is used to prevent curves from getting worse over time. The Scoliosis Research Society defines bracing success as a curve that progresses less than 5 degrees when it is time to take the brace off. If your curve looks better after you take the brace off, it may slowly return to the curve size it was when you started bracing. This is expected as your spine slowly relaxes after taking the brace off. Sometimes, even if you are super compliant with wearing your brace, the curve may still progress over time. However, bracing has been shown to be very successful in patients that fit into the criteria listed above.