



Family Education Sheet



Home Care Instructions for Patients with an Ankle-Foot Orthosis (AFO)

An ankle-foot orthosis is a brace that goes around the ankle and most of the foot. It helps make sure the ankle is in the correct position when walking, and can help correct some problems (such as weakness) with the ankle or foot.



Before your child goes home from the hospital you should:

- Know how to safely put on and remove your child's AFO.
- Check your child's skin to make sure the AFO fits well.
- Review your child's restrictions with your nurse. You should know how much weight your child can bear (stand), how much your child can move his/her ankle or foot (range of motion), and how active your child can be.
- Ask your nurse any questions you have about the AFO.

When your child is home from the hospital you should:

- Have your child start using the brace gradually. Increase the time your child wears the brace every day.
- Have your child wear the brace with a tight sock underneath and a shoe.
- Check your child's skin every 4 hours while wearing the brace. Call your doctor or nurse if there is any redness that doesn't go away within half an hour.
- Once your child has worked up to wearing the brace all day, the brace should be worn at all times except during skin checks, bathing, and sleeping.

Call your doctor or nurse if:

- Your child has any new skin issues. Measure the affected area and describe the tissue when you call.
- The AFO causes your child pain or serious discomfort.
- The AFO is broken or soiled.
- You have any questions or concerns.

Numbers to Call

- **Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:00pm:** Call the Orthopedic Clinic at 617-355-6021.
- **Weekdays after 5:00 pm, weekends and holidays:** Call the hospital page operator at 617-355-6369 and ask to speak with the orthopedic resident on-call.

A [Spanish](#) version of this is available from your provider

Send comments or questions to: Familed@childrens.harvard.edu
