

# Knee Ankle Foot Orthosis (KAFO)

This leaflet explains more about KAFO's. If you have any further questions, please speak to the Orthotist caring for you.

## What is a Knee Ankle Foot Orthosis (KAFO)?

A KAFO is a brace that supports your knee, ankle, and foot. It helps people who have weakness or deformity in their lower leg. The brace has two parts: one for your thigh and one for your calf and foot. These parts are connected by metal bars with a knee joint that can lock and unlock to help you sit.

## How to put on your KAFO:

1. Wear a smooth sock or tights with no wrinkles that cover all your skin under the KAFO.
2. Open all the straps on the KAFO.
3. Sit down with your knee bent if you can, and make sure the knee joint is unlocked.
4. Put your leg into the KAFO. Make sure your thigh is inside the top section and your heel is firmly at the back of the foot section.
5. Fasten the ankle strap first to keep your foot from slipping.
6. Fasten all the other straps securely. If your KAFO has a knee apron, fasten that too.
7. Put on your shoes over the KAFO. If your shoes feel tight, try removing the shoe's insole.
8. Make sure the knee joint is locked (if applicable) before putting weight on your leg.



If you're unsure about anything, please speak to your orthotist (the specialist who you saw regarding footwear).

## Wearing your KAFO:

It takes time to get used to your KAFO. Start by wearing it for short times and slowly wear it longer:

- Day 1: 30-60 minutes
- Day 2: 1-2 hours
- Day 3: 2-4 hours

- Days 4-7: 4-6 hours
- Week 2: 6+ hours or as you can tolerate

Start walking on flat ground in a safe, familiar place. Trial stairs and slopes with your orthotist or other therapist first, to ensure it is safe for you to do so.

## **Skin care:**

Check your skin every time you remove your KAFO. It is normal to see red marks that go away within 30 minutes. If redness lasts, or if you see blisters, broken skin, or feel pain, stop wearing the KAFO and contact your orthotic department promptly.

## **Caring for your KAFO:**

- Clean it with antibacterial wipes or a cloth with warm soapy water. Let it dry naturally.
- Don't use heat sources like hair dryers or put it near radiators.
- Don't soak the KAFO in water.
- Remove any fluff from straps to keep them working well.
- Check for loose parts, cracks, or damage. If you see any, contact your orthotics department immediately. Don't try to fix it yourself.

## **Important information:**

- Your KAFO **must** be checked for safety every 6 months. **You** are responsible for this. Please contact the department to arrange a date/time for you to drop it off to the Orthotics department for inspection.

## **Contact us:**

If you have any questions or concerns about orthotics, please contact admin on 020 8487 6056/6033 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4pm). Out of hours, please email: [orthotics.qmh@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:orthotics.qmh@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

## **Additional services**

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### **NHS Choices**

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111



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