

# Spinal corset and abdominal support

A user guide

## Information for patients



**PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



## **What is a spinal corset or abdominal support?**

A spinal corset or abdominal support is made from fabric material and will contain supportive struts, bones, elastic panels and/or pads. It fastens with velcro straps, buckles or laces. The supports are available either as custom made to your measurements or be a ready-made device. The orthotist will assess your needs and take the appropriate measurements required to achieve a good fit.

## **Why have I been provided with a spinal or abdominal support?**

Spinal corsets are prescribed to

- control and support the spine and pelvis
- to limit motion of the joints, ligaments and muscles in your back
- to support vertebrae which have structural weakness
- to reduce pain

Abdominal supports are prescribed to

- to support weak stomach muscles after surgery
- reduce hernia
- to support non reducible hernia
- support a stoma

## **How should I wear the spinal corset or abdominal support?**

You should wear a vest or T-shirt under the support which is

- well-fitting to eliminate creases
- made from cotton rich or wicking material
- long enough to cover and protect all the areas of the skin, which come into contact with the support.

Spinal supports should only be worn for short periods of time, unless it is post-surgery or fracture when you may need to wear it constantly for a set period of time. An abdominal support should be worn at all times

except at night when you are lying down. The person prescribing the support will tell you when to wear it.

Spinal or abdominal supports should only be worn during the day and should be removed at night time.

### **How do I put on the spinal corset or abdominal support?**

1. Ideally put a spinal support on whilst standing, however it can also be put on sitting or lying down if necessary. An abdominal support should be put on while lying down especially if it has been prescribed to support a hernia as the hernia will reduce in size when lying.

2. Open the fastenings of the support. The fastenings are normally at the front but are sometimes at the sides. Place the support against your spine centrally. If it has back steels ensure they are positioned on each side of your spine.

3. Fasten the bottom strap first to anchor the support in the correct place around the hips, and then fasten the remaining straps ensuring they are snug enough so the support does not move around. It may be more comfortable to have the top strap a little looser than the others especially if the support extends over your rib cage. If your support has one, fasten the fulcrum strap last. This is the belt that lies over the hips or hernia and helps to hold the support in place.

### **How do I care for the spinal corset or abdominal support?**

You should keep your support in good repair. The orthotics department can repair it e.g. replace worn fastenings or elastics. Please clean it before returning it for repair. Supports can be washed and you should be provided with specific washing instructions when you have it fitted. Most supports can be washed in the washing machine at 30 degrees with the back steels removed. Do not tumble dry your support.

The support supplied is considered the most appropriate for your condition. You may discuss alternative orthoses with the orthotist. If you have any problems with your support contact your orthotist.

## Prescription charges

Some supports incur a prescription charge. This is a government requirement as described by the Department of Health policy number HSG (95) 17. You will be advised of any charge prior to having the support ordered, including exemption criteria.

## Tell us what you think

Our team is always interested in your comments on the items provided and the service you receive. Please feel free to phone or write to the manager if you wish to give us any feedback.

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