

## Knee ankle foot orthoses (KAFO) and knee braces/supports

### What is a KAFO?

An orthosis is a customised device that provides support and protection to a particular area of the body. A knee ankle foot orthoses (KAFO) is a bespoke item that supports the whole leg. The orthotist will design a KAFO to meet your clinical and physical requirements. They can be manufactured from a range of materials, including plastic, metal, and carbon fibre. The orthotist will decide on the most appropriate design and material for you and advise you on the type supplied. You should attend the orthotic department if you notice any wear and tear on your device.

### How do I put my KAFO on?

You can put the device on either sitting or lying down. Your KAFO will either fit directly into your shoe/s or into sockets fitted into the heels of the shoes. Socks, stockings, or tights should be worn as normal. There are normally fastening straps on the thigh, calf, and knee of the KAFO – the orthotist will instruct you on how to fasten them and you should ensure you fasten them in the same manner.

If your KAFO is jointed, you must ensure that both sides are locked before you weight bear and walk. You should hear an audible 'click' as you straighten your leg however you should physically check that both joints have fastened before you move. **Failure to do so will strain your KAFO and possibly result in you falling.**

### What footwear should I wear?

The correct footwear can influence the effectiveness of the device. A trainer or walking shoe work very well with your device.

The best shoes for providing support and comfort are lace-up (or Velcro, strap, and buckle). They should:

- be no higher than 3cm at the heel
- have a moulded rubber sole
- fit to your foot without causing any rubbing and will help to prevent your feet from sweating

Avoid shoes that offer little support. These include slip-ons, sandals, low heels, or flat shoes. You need to ensure that you have footwear with enough size to accommodate both your device and your foot without creating pressure on your toes.

### What is a knee brace/support?

Knee braces are commonly made from fabric and provided by an orthotist to suit your individual requirements.

There are numerous reasons to use a knee support, most often following soft tissue trauma.

## Contact us

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## Sources of information

**British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO)**

Website: [www.BAPO.org](http://www.BAPO.org)

**NHS Scotland** Scottish Diabetes Group - Foot Action Group

## Important information

This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

## Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the patient experience team on 0300 131 4784 or [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net).

## Hand hygiene

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## Other formats

**If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or [esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net)**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

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## Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

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The Clinical Specialty/Unit that have agreed this patient information leaflet: Community Health and Integrated Care

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