

# **What to expect with your new orthotic device:**

Bracing can often be a confusing process for patients which is why we want to make this process as painless as possible. We are dedicated to you, our patients, and strive to provide the care you deserve. Please take a moment to read through our “What to expect” guide where we provide a detailed account of the bracing process.

## **Why do I need a brace?**

There are many reasons why a patient may require a brace; whether it is to facilitate rehabilitation, to control pain or to promote healing. For a detailed explanation of why you need a brace consult your physician. In most cases bracing is determined by a team of specialists; your therapist and physician prescribe the device you have been ordered and they would be happy to help you understand why you require a brace. It is important to understand that your Orthotist did not prescribe your device and can not dramatically change the prescription in any way.

## **How will I be measured for my new brace?**

Our facility specializes in custom bracing meaning that we will need a mold of your body to create your new brace. This can be as easy as a set of measurements or as complicated as a casting. In most cases our practitioners will use fiber glass to mold the area of your body which requires bracing. It will take approximately five minutes for the casting material to dry at which time the practitioner will remove the cast. We then use this cast to create a mold for your custom brace. This method is used for bracing the arms, legs, torso and head. In some cases it is necessary to mold the feet, especially if you are receiving foot orthotics. This is a simple process in which the practitioner will place your feet into soft moldable foam. The type of molding required varies based upon the complexity of the brace and if it is custom or non-custom. When you arrive for your initial visit the practitioner will inform you of what molding process is required and guide you through how he/she will be molding you.

## **When can I expect to receive my brace?**

Most of our devices are custom made by hand, a craftsmanship that takes a bit of time unfortunately. We do our best to prepare custom devices with in a week of your initial visit. Insurance verification, ordering of parts and volume of fabrication can all hold up this process. But be assured we are working hard to fabricate your brace as quickly as possible.

If you were prescribed a non-custom device or off the shelf device your wait can be much shorter. We have a stock of many off the shelf devices so that our patients can receive their new bracing the day of their initial visit. However even some of the off the shelf devices need to be ordered from an outside vendor. The ordering process varies in time, we offer an estimation of one week for devices which need to be ordered from an outside vendor.

If you are anxiously awaiting the delivery of your device feel free to give our office staff a call at 314-535-5359 Monday through Friday 8am to 4:30pm.

### **Will my brace fit perfectly when I receive it?**

Due to the nature of any custom work we can not guarantee a perfect fit on the day of your delivery. Slight adjustments are necessary to almost all braces. When you arrive for the delivery of your brace your practitioner will have you “try it out” by doing a variety of activities in our office to assure comfort. Our standard answer is that braces require three adjustments, small tweaks to make the brace as unique as you are. Most of these tweaks will be done at your delivery appointment but in the case of more complicated bracing it may require another visit to our office. In every case we suggest one follow up visit a week after your delivery to ensure fit and to clarify any questions which may arise after you take the device home.

### **Is my brace going to be ugly?**

Braces are not fashionable, they are functional. With this in mind some braces are better looking than others. Whereas your brace may not help you qualify for a beauty contest it will assist you in getting back to your normal activities. Due to the materials we use braces are available in a limited selection of colors, they often appear bulky and they even sometimes make clicking noises. We realize that the appearance of a brace is not its most alluring quality but we hope you understand that despite a devices appearance it is there to help you get back on your feet.

### **Are there Color options or patterns?**

There are a variety of patterns and colors available for braces made of plastic. We accomplish this by using transfer paper. If you would like to see what transfer paper we have available or if your brace is able to be colored please ask your practitioner. If your brace is made of Carbon fiber we can paint it flesh tone or a variety of colors. Ask your practitioner if this service is available for your brace.

### **How am I going to fit this in a shoe?**

Many of our braces function inside of a shoe; so this is a question we get a lot. First it is important to understand that your brace is custom and trimmed to the exact size and shape of your foot. However, a brace adds bulk taking up extra room in your shoe which is why in most cases you will require a new pair of shoes. Unfortunately our facility does not have the space to accommodate an extensive selection of shoes and we do not have the staff to operate a large scale shoe store. So our facility only provides medically necessary diabetic shoes. If you do not fall into the diabetic category you are responsible for providing a shoe to accommodate your brace. Typically we refer our patients to the New Balance shoe store on Clayton Rd or for a more cost affective solution Payless shoe stores. We suggest choosing a tennis shoe with a wide toe section. An athletic shoe has

the best design to accommodate a brace. Please be advised that braces are designed specifically for medical purposes and thus we take every precaution to ensure that our braces do not cause blisters, calluses or wounds. The shape of your braces foot plate is designed to protect you, please take your practitioners advice as to how it should fit.

### **How long will my brace last?**

The life of a brace is very dependent on how it is worn. You may want to review our wear and care instructions to ensure the long life of your brace. Most insurance providers will replace a brace once a year; however you may not need a new brace for several years. We suggest a check up every six months to determine how well your brace is functioning.

### **How much is this going to cost me?**

That's a difficult question because it varies so greatly from patient to patient. The cost of your device is determined by your insurance provider. Our office staff will verify your benefits and provide you with a detailed explanation of how much or how little you may owe. We ask that you don't ask our practitioner staff about financial arrangements; they are not prepared to explain your benefits or to quote costs of goods.

### **What if I hate my brace?**

Unfortunately we can't do much about your feelings toward a brace. We are happy to adjust any of our braces for the life of that device. Given that we produce custom bracing, our devices are non-refundable. If you are hesitant about bracing contact your physician. Your doctor will be able to discuss your options and hopefully find a solution.