

About your knee ankle foot orthosis (K.A.F.O)

Surgical Appliance Department
Tel: 01271 322492

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

What is a knee ankle foot orthosis?

This is a highly technical device to support the whole leg, and must be looked after properly and refurbished when necessary. It is sometimes called a caliper. There are many different types of knee ankle foot orthosis (KAFO). Some have leather thigh sections, leather-covered calf bands and metal spurs that go into a socket in the heel of your shoes. Other types are of moulded plastic thigh and below-knee sections. There are many variations between these basic types. The orthotist will choose the right KAFO for your needs.

When do I use it?

The orthotist will instruct you as to how, when and where you should wear the KAFO. It is essential that you follow the instructions given. The orthotist will show you how to fit it, and how to adjust the straps and kneecap so that you get the most benefit from the device.

What do I do with the knee joints?

There are different types of joints available. The orthotist will have chosen the correct ones for your needs. If they are the manual type, then it is essential that you lock both joints. If you fail to do this, then you could do serious damage to the KAFO. If your caliper has automatic joints, they will lock automatically when you straighten your knee. It is advisable however to always check the joints are fully locked.

If my KAFO has a plastic below-knee section, what should I do?

If you have a plastic below-knee section (ankle foot orthosis) then when you first receive your new KAFO it is advisable to wear it for 30 – 40 minutes. Then remove the KAFO and check your leg, ankle and foot for any pressure areas. Build up the use of the KAFO over a few days until you are sure that everything is all right; you can then wear it as much as required.

How do I look after my KAFO?

If your KAFO has spur ends that go into a socket in your footwear, check that they fit into the socket and that there is no excessive wear to the spur or socket. Keep the socket clear of dust and dirt, and occasionally apply a small amount oil or Vaseline to the spurs and the knee joints. This will reduce wear. If your KAFO is leather-covered and it becomes worn, you can have it recovered. It is wise to have the KAFO checked each year to make sure it is safe to wear.

The Orthotic Department will arrange your follow-up appointments.

Further information

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Surgical Appliance/Orthotic Department on **01271 322492**.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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