

About your hinged ankle foot orthosis (HAFO)

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 hinged ankle foot orthosis?

The hinged ankle foot orthosis (H.A.F.O) is a moulded plastic splint to stabilize the foot and ankle. It may allow full up and down movement of the foot, or it may have a system that will restrict the amount of ankle movement. The orthotist will have taken a cast to have one specially made for you and will design the splint to satisfy your clinical needs.

Different foot lengths are available, some finishing behind the ball of the foot, whilst others will have a full foot to the toe end. The orthotist will decide which is best for your condition.

What is the best type of shoe to wear?

Where possible it is best to wear a shoe with a fastening, as this will hold your foot onto the H.A.F.O. The best type of fastening is a lace as this is the most secure. Try to get a shoe that comes well up the instep, either a trainer or similar will do this.

It is best to buy your shoes *after* you have the H.A.F.O, as it will affect the fit of your shoes.

Do not wear boots, as this will restrict the amount of movement in the ankle joints.

How do I fit the H.A.F.O?

It is important that the H.A.F.O is fitted as instructed by the orthotist or the physiotherapist.

1. For comfort wear a cotton sock underneath the H.A.F.O. If possible use a sock that is the same length up the leg as the splint.
2. Ensure your heel is well into the heel seat of the H.A.F.O
3. If you are fitting the splint onto a child, it is best that you hold the front of the foot with one hand and the back of the H.A.F.O with the other hand, whilst sliding the foot into the splint. The orthotist will show you how to do this.

4. Do the calf strap up so that it is comfortable.
5. If there is an instep strap, then this needs to be done up firmly to hold the foot into the splint.
6. There may be a toe strap as well, to hold the forefoot onto the foot plate. This also needs to be done up firmly but comfortably.

What should I do when I start to wear an H.A.F.O or if I'm given a new one?

At first wear the splint for 30 – 60 minutes. Then remove the splint and your sock and check for any red areas on the foot/leg. If these do not go within 10 minutes, then the H.A.F.O may need to be adjusted. If so, please contact the Surgical Appliance/Orthotic department on 01271 322492 to arrange an appointment.

If everything seems to be all right after the first wearing then gradually increase the time you wear it until you are sure you're not going to have any problems. Eventually the H.A.F.O can be worn all day.

How do I look after my H.A.F.O?

Do

- keep the H.A.F.O well maintained and have any worn or broken straps repaired.
- keep the H.A.F.O away from direct heat as this can distort the plastic.
- keep it away from pets

Do not

- force the H.A.F.O on or force the splint into a tight shoe.
- wash the H.A.F.O as hot water can distort the plastic. If unlined it can be sponged with fresh water.
- try and adjust the H.A.F.O yourself as it is specifically designed for you and if adapted, may not work.
- give your splint to someone else as it could cause problems for them.

Further information

If you have any questions or concerns about your H.A.F.O, please contact the Surgical Appliance Officer at North Devon District Hospital 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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