

Pectus Wear & Care Guide

 Hanger Clinic®



pediatric
SPECIALISTS

Your pectus carinatum orthosis has been designed to apply sustained pressure to the sternum and help you achieve your personal rehabilitation goals.

These instructions will help you learn how to correctly use and care for your orthosis, define a wearing schedule, and provide a treatment plan including an appointment follow-up schedule.

If you have any specific questions about your orthosis or care plan, please contact your orthotist.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Your orthotist will ensure your pectus carinatum orthosis fits properly and that you feel comfortable putting on and removing the brace. The orthosis will push directly on the sternum, decreasing the prominence of the sternum protrusion.

The goal of this treatment is to maintain the reduction until skeletal maturity occurs. Willingness to wear the brace is essential to the success of this treatment. Regular follow-up appointments are important to assess the fit and function of your brace and your ongoing orthotic and rehabilitation goals.



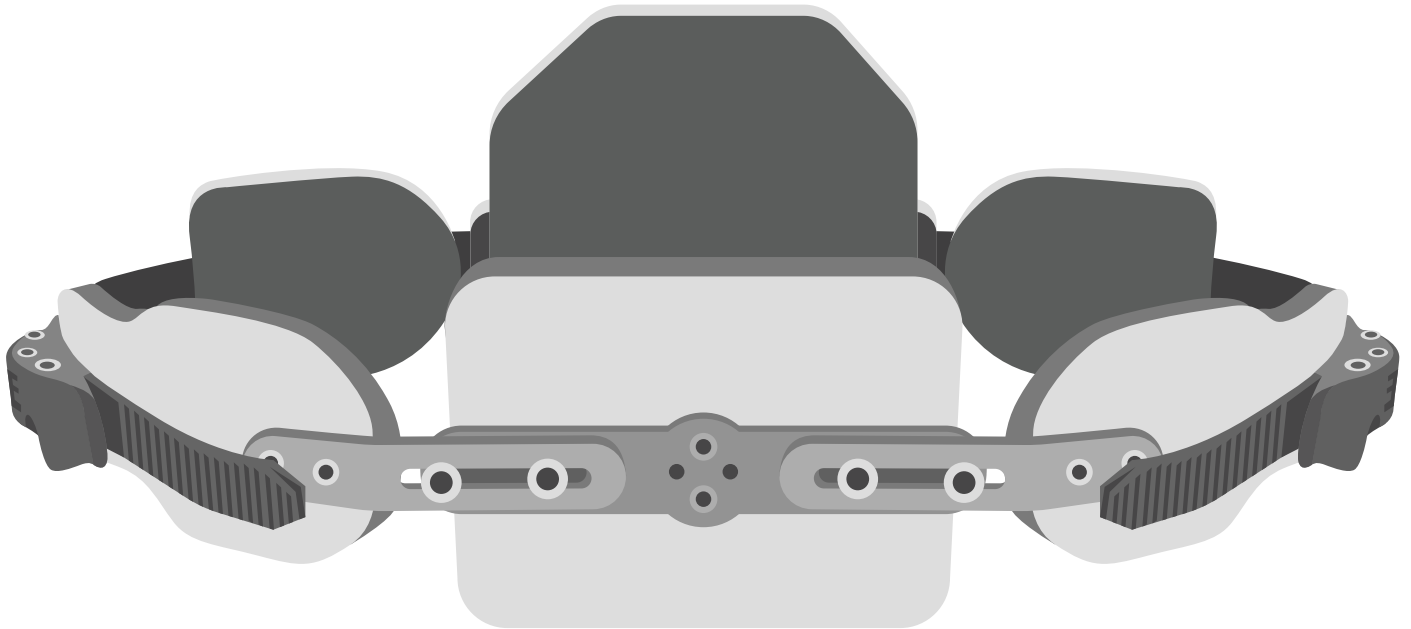
CLOTHING

Always wear a clean, dry, close-fitting shirt underneath the brace to protect your skin. You may need a loose-fitting shirt or slight adjustment in clothing size or style to fit over the brace. Clothing with a button or zipper may require an increase in one to two sizes. Choose the style of clothing that makes you feel most comfortable.

PUTTING ON YOUR BRACE

Your orthotist will guide you on how to put on and remove your specific brace. Below are some general guidelines.

1. Always start by wearing a thin, clean, dry cotton t-shirt underneath your brace.
2. Position your brace with the appropriate pad in the front and back.
3. To put the brace on, place the brace on the chest over the highest part of the prominence.
4. Thread the ladder strap through the ratchet on the side and tighten. Keep one side of the brace fastened at all times to maintain tightness and make it easier to put on the brace. The brace should be worn so that it provides gentle compression to the protruded chest and is tight enough to not slide around, but it should not restrict normal breathing. Marks on the brace will be provided as a guideline for appropriate tightness.*
Your orthosis may not attach with a ladder strap. If the design differs, consult your orthotist.



WEARING INSTRUCTIONS

Follow the wearing schedule provided by your orthotist. We encourage you to participate in all your normal activities, including exercise. It is recommended to remove the brace for all athletics, physical education class, swimming, and bathing activities.

When your brace is off at school, it should be stored somewhere locked or monitored, such as a gym teacher's office, athletic locker, or nurse's office to prevent it from being lost, stolen, or damaged. You may require assistance from the school nurse or gym teacher to get the brace back on and to the recommended lines on the straps. If your school requires a note, please notify your orthotist.

WEARING SCHEDULE

At first, your pectus brace may feel uncomfortable. It may feel like it is difficult to take a deep breath, and you may feel the pressures of the brace. It is recommended you gradually increase the number of hours per day the brace is worn. In general, we suggest you increase use over the course of a week, with the goal to be in the prescribed wearing schedule by the second week.

Your orthotist will provide a personalized break-in schedule that will help you gradually increase the number of hours per day your pectus brace is worn. This allows time for the body to adjust to the compression of the orthosis. A typical wearing schedule may look something like this.

DAY	WEAR TIME	
1	1 HOUR ON AT HOME	Wear the orthosis for 30 minutes, and then check your skin. If your skin is pink, continue to wear the orthosis for another 30 minutes. If the skin is red or sore, leave the orthosis off for an additional 30 minutes, and then put the orthosis back on.
2	2 HOURS ON AT HOME	Wear the orthosis for 1 hour, and then check your skin. If your skin is pink, continue to wear the orthosis for another 1 hour. If the skin is red or sore, leave the orthosis off for an additional 30 minutes, and then put the orthosis back on.
3	4 HOURS ON	Wear the orthosis for 2 hours, and then check your skin. If your skin is pink, continue to wear the orthosis for another 2 hours. If the skin is red or sore, leave the orthosis off for an additional 30 minutes, and then put the orthosis back on.
4	6 HOURS ON	Wear the orthosis for 3 hours, and then check your skin. If your skin is pink, wear the orthosis for another 3 hours. If the skin is red or sore leave, the orthosis off for an additional 30 minutes, and then put the orthosis back on.
5	SLEEP IN THE ORTHOSIS 8 HOURS OVERNIGHT	Wear the orthosis overnight while you sleep. If you find that you wake up or are unable to sleep, work into wearing the orthosis through the entire night. Once you can sleep in your orthosis overnight, move on to adding additional hours during the day.
6	SLEEP IN THE ORTHOSIS 8 HOURS OVERNIGHT & 4 HOURS DURING THE DAY	Wear the orthosis throughout the night while you sleep and 4 hours during the day. If your skin is red or sore in the morning, leave the orthosis off for 30 minutes and then put the orthosis back on.
7	SLEEP IN THE ORTHOSIS 8 HOURS OVERNIGHT & 6 HOURS DURING THE DAY	Wear the orthosis throughout the night while you sleep and 6 hours during the day. If your skin is red or sore in the morning, leave the orthosis off for 30 minutes and then put the orthosis back on.
8	WEAR THE ORTHOSIS 12–23* HOURS PER DAY AS PRESCRIBED BY YOUR PHYSICIAN	Wear the orthosis throughout the night while you sleep and during the day. If your skin is red or sore in the morning, leave the orthosis off for 30 minutes and then put the orthosis back on.

**It is important to note that this wearing schedule is a recommendation. Some individuals require a longer period to acclimate to the orthosis. Be patient if additional time is needed to reach the maximum brace wearing time.*

BEDTIME WEAR

It is common to feel some slight discomfort due to the pressures applied within the brace. You can try sleeping on your side, back, or stomach. If you are unable to fall asleep after a long period, take the brace off and try again the next night. Once you can fall asleep with your brace on, you may wake up in the middle of the night. If this is the case and you do not typically wake up, remove the orthosis and continue to get a full night's sleep. Over time, your body will adjust to the new feelings of wearing a brace and you should be able to sleep normally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Wearing the pectus brace for gym, exercise, and sports is not recommended, loosen straps for these activities or remove if necessary.
- If participating in choir or instruments requiring deep breaths, loosen straps for these activities or remove if necessary.
- If you find discomfort while eating, loosen the straps or remove the brace. The brace may remain on for snacks.
- You may have to accommodate for your body changing over time. For example, as you get taller sometimes a person will get thinner and need to make the brace tighter to prevent migration. As you feel comfortable, tighten the straps.
- Do not submerge the brace in water as moisture will become trapped inside and may cause the brace to smell.
- Never leave your brace in a car during extreme weather. It can become brittle in extreme cold and can warp in extreme heat.



SKIN CARE

Each time the brace is removed, look over your skin closely. Some skin discoloration, such as a pink to red color, is expected due to the compressive nature of the brace. Pink areas over the peak of the chest protrusion are normal. Look for red marks that do not go away within 45-60 minutes. When pressed, pressure marks should turn a lighter shade and pressure marks should fade within 45- 60 minutes. Discolored areas under the corrective pads may not fade, and this is normal.

If you notice darkened areas that have the appearance of a bruise, redness, or skin abrasions, especially over boney areas, that do not turn lighter and do not disappear within 45-60 minutes or are uncomfortable, contact your orthotist to discuss if an adjustment is required.

Plan to bathe daily, either in the morning or evening. Keep the skin under the brace clean by wiping it down with baby wipes or a clean damp wash cloth 2 times each day. Good times to consider are in the morning, after school, and/ or before bed.

Avoid putting any type of lotion or powder on the skin before wearing the brace. These soften the skin and may allow skin breakdown to occur. You may apply lotion or powder when the brace is off, but confirm the skin is clean and any excess lotion or powder is removed 45 minutes before wearing the brace again.

CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS

Clean the orthosis each day with warm water, mild soap, and dry with a towel. Please review any specific orthosis brace care with your clinician. The brace will not absorb water, but any straps or pads will need time to dry. Never use any chemicals to clean the orthosis.

Shirts worn under the brace will absorb most of the sweat, but perspiration can collect on the pads over time. Make it part of your weekly routine to use 70% isopropyl rubbing alcohol to clean the inside of the brace. Spray bottles with rubbing alcohol and washcloths work great to clean the brace quickly. Harsh cleaners, such as bleach wipes, are not recommended. Both you and the brace should be dry before putting it on.

APPOINTMENT SCHEDULE

After the delivery of your pectus brace, your orthotist will set a schedule to review your progress over the coming weeks and months. Here is an example of what your journey may look like:

APPOINTMENT	ACTIVITY
Initial Orthotic Fitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fit and adjust orthosis• Review how to put on the orthosis, wearing schedule, cleaning instructions, and follow-up schedule
2-3 Week Orthotic Follow-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate fit and make adjustments as necessary
Every 3-4 Months Orthotic Follow-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete patient scan and review measurements and shape changes• Evaluate orthosis fit and make adjustments as necessary
Every 6 Months Primary Care Follow-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with primary care for continued assessment• Can alternate primary care appointments between orthotic appointments

As you go through this journey, remember you are not alone. Your Hanger Clinic orthotist is available to answer your questions and support you in any way they can.

If we do not hear from you, we will assume you are wearing your brace every day without issue. Do not go days or weeks without wearing your brace. We are here to help. Do not hesitate to call us.

Your next appointment is on:

