Day-to-day wear
Any device being worn in close contact with the skin has the potential to cause undue pressure. It is perfectly normal to see red marks on your skin when you remove your device. Please recheck your skin a couple of hours after you have removed it, if the red marks have not faded or disappeared altogether, contact the Orthotics Department to arrange a review appointment.

If you notice any rash or skin reaction after wearing your device, please stop wearing your KAFO or knee brace/support and contact the department.

Day-to-day care
If your device is manufactured from fabric it can be cleaned as per the manufacturer’s instructions; other devices can be wiped clean with a damp cloth.

Follow-up appointments
You will be normally invited to attend a review appointment a few weeks after the supply of the your KAFO or knee brace/support, this is to evaluate the effectiveness, if appropriate a 2nd device will be ordered at this appointment.

Replacements/repairs
If you notice excessive wear on your KAFO or knee brace/support i.e. straps, padding or fastening; or a change in your ankle condition i.e. increased pain, please contact the department to arrange a review appointment with the Orthotist.

What happens if I have a problem?
If you have a problem with your brace/support, please contact:
Orthotics Department
Outpatients Area 1
Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham (QEHB)
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston
Birmingham, B15 2WB
Telephone: 0121 371 6415/6

Your Orthotist is:

The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm or call 0121 371 4957.
Knee ankle foot orthoses (KAFO) and knee brace/supports

Your consultant/doctor or health professional has referred you for a knee ankle foot orthoses (KAFO) or a knee brace/support. You have been assessed by the orthotist. The orthotist will design the appropriate device, to meet your specific needs and requirements.

Knee ankle foot orthoses (KAFO) and knee brace/supports are used to support and control the knee. By their nature they are complex devices performing complex function. An example is a knee brace being used to perform the function of knee ligaments following trauma.

The types of devices we supply are: Knee ankle foot orthoses (KAFO)

Your 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 to you. You should attend the Orthotic Department every 6 months so your KAFO/s can be checked for wear and tear.

How do I put a 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 with these devices?

Your choice of footwear is very important; the correct footwear can influence the effectiveness of the device.

A trainer/walking shoe work very well with your device (any trainer should be non-corrective and neutral). Lace-up footwear with a heel height between 25mm-35mm and a moulded rubber sole unit is preferable.

Shoes with leather uppers are the best to provide support and comfort. Avoid shoes that offer little support, these include slip-ons, sandals, low-heeled 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.

Knee braces

Knee braces are normally stock devices that are provided to suit the very individual requirements that each patient has - they are complex devices. The orthotist will decide which knee brace meets your needs and that it is functionally correct for you.

Knee supports

There are a numerous reasons to use a knee support. They are commonly made from fabric used following soft tissue trauma. These devices are used when there is a need to support or control the position of the knee. There is a vast array of devices made from a variety of materials; your orthotist will decide correct knee support for you.