

Caring for your child in an Aspen Collar



Your Orthotist is _____

Ph. 9345 9300

Your child has been fitted with a rigid neck collar for either a soft tissue injury or a stable fracture of the cervical spine (neck).

Your doctor will determine how many weeks your child is required to wear the collar. In most cases, the collar will be worn for six to twelve weeks full time. This is dependent on how quickly the injury heals and is normally confirmed via x-rays or an assessment in clinic.

Wearing routine: Your doctor has determined that your child needs to wear the neck collar:

24 hours a day without removing it at all. It cannot be removed to clean the neck.

OR

All the time except when sponge bathing around the neck whilst the head is immobilised. (Described over the page)

OR

For comfort

Sleeping: Your child will need to sleep in the collar. It is important that your child keeps their neck in a normal alignment whilst their injury heals. When sleeping they should be encouraged to sleep on their back **without pillows**, as these tend to push the neck into flexion.

Bathing: Your child is at increased risk of slips and falls while bathing. We recommend that you take these precautions:

- Use a non slip/suction shower mat and place on bath floor away from drain.
- Assist your child into the empty bath and to sit down.
- Use a flexible shower hose to wash and rinse body as appropriate ensuring collar does not get wet. (Shower hoses which slip over existing taps are available from many hardware stores).
- Assist your child to get out of bath as required, to ensure they are stable and do not slip or fall.
- Dry and dress your child, leaving collar accessible.

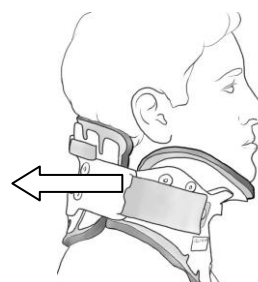
Hair care and maintenance: You can use dry shampoo products available from a chemist that do not require water or rinsing

- Hair does not need to be washed daily. You may choose to do this weekly.
- Comb short hair daily.
- Long hair can be plaited or put in ponytails to minimise care required.

Washing the neck: YOU MAY ONLY DO THIS IF SPECIFICALLY ALLOWED BY YOUR DOCTOR

This is best performed with two adults, especially for younger or non-compliant children

- Lay your child on a towel on a firm surface without any pillows.
- Have one person keep the head still by holding it on either side above the ears.
- The second adult removes the front chin piece by undoing both Velcro tabs.
- Wash around the neck and under the chin with a soft, damp facewisher.
- Replace the front section by scooping the collar along the breast bone to ensure the chin piece sits firmly under the chin for support. Leave the Velcro tabs undone.
- Remove the back section by sliding it out sideways between the neck and towel.
- Wash the back of the neck as best you are able, without moving the head.
- **DO NOT LIFT THE HEAD OR BEND THE NECK.**
- Use a soap free wash or plain water to avoid a rash caused by soap residue.
- Check the skin for any areas of pressure. If you are concerned about any pressure call the orthotics department to make an appointment for review.
- **IF THE SKIN IS BROKEN, YOUR CHILD REQUIRES AN URGENT REVIEW WITH THE ORTHOTIC DEPARTMENT.**
- Dry gently with a soft towel. Do not use any powder or moisturizer/lotion.
- Replace the back neck piece by sliding it under the neck until there is an equal amount of the neck piece visible either side. Continue to keep the head and neck still.
- Close Velcro tabs, ensuring that both sides are equal.
- The collar should fit firmly around your child's neck.
- Assist your child to get up and complete dressing if required.



When the collar is fitting correctly the plastic chin section should not come forward of the chin.

Replacement or spare collars:

Replacement liners/pads are available if your child is required to wear the brace for more than two weeks. These can be supplied at a review appointment to be booked.

If you wish to purchase a second Aspen Collar from the Orthotic Department the cost of this is \$230.00 (Correct April 2013) This is not normally required.

Contact the Orthotics Department if you have any concerns or questions regarding your child's treatment with the Aspen collar.

**The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne Orthotic Department.
Ph. 93459300**

Monday to Friday 8am till 4.30pm