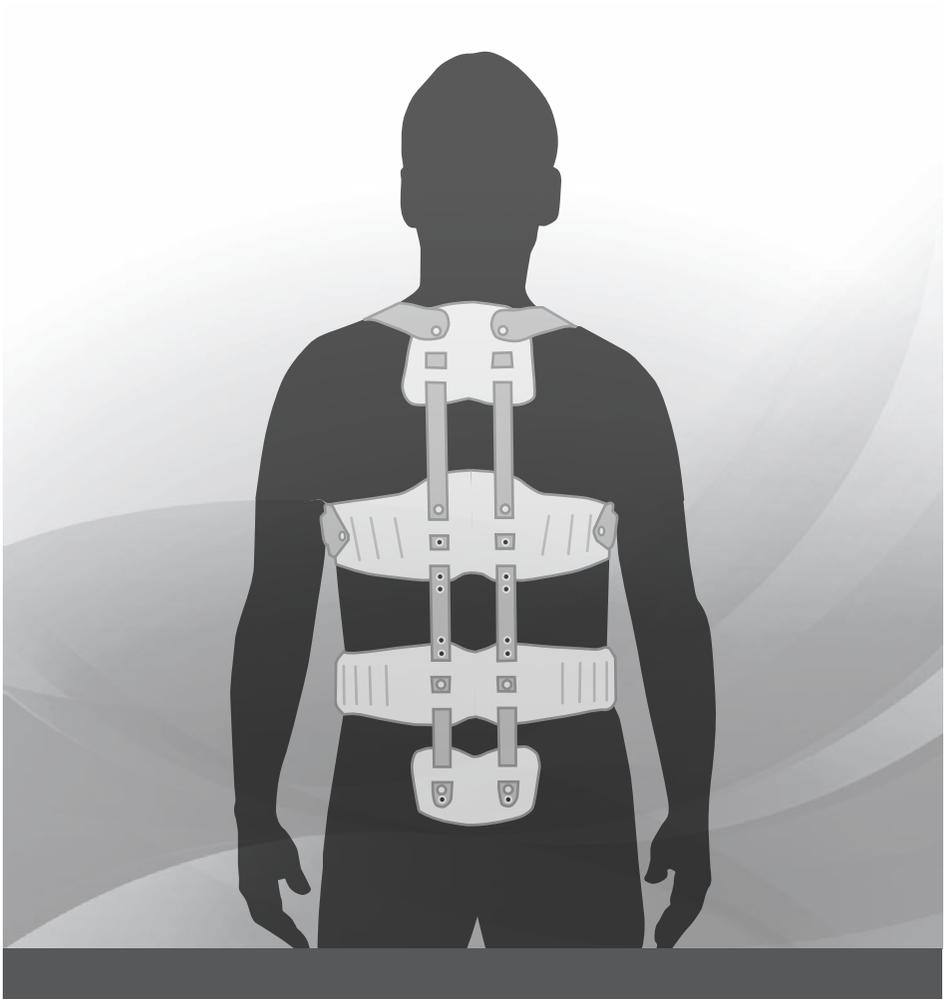


Information about the

# MKS Thorecta Plus



Use of an MKS Thorecta Plus Brace Following Damage to the Spine without Nerve Damage.

Following a spinal injury or surgery we need to prevent too much movement of the spine. We can achieve this with a non-surgical approach (bedrest or wearing a brace), surgical internal fixation or a combination of both. One of the most commonly used braces in keeping with current evidence based practice is the MKS Thorecta Plus.

## **Aim of the MKS Thorect Plus:**

You wear the brace as an external splint to protect your spine against too much bending and twisting whilst the fracture or damage to the spine is healing.

## **When do you start wearing the brace?**

You usually wear the brace for to 3 months from the day of your surgery or as soon as possible after the damage to your spine happens. Sometimes your Consultant may extend this time. An orthotist will measure and fit the correct size of brace. (An orthotist is a healthcare professional who assesses for, and fits braces and splints (orthoses) for people who need added support for body parts that have been weakened by injury, disease, or disorders of the nerves, muscles, or bones)

Your multidisciplinary team (MDT) will decide when it is safe for you to sit up with the brace on and get out of bed.

## **How should I wear the brace?**

You should wear the brace at all times and put on and take off as guided by your consultant or MDT. It helps if you wear a cotton t-shirt or vest under the brace for comfort. The following pages will show you how to put on the brace.

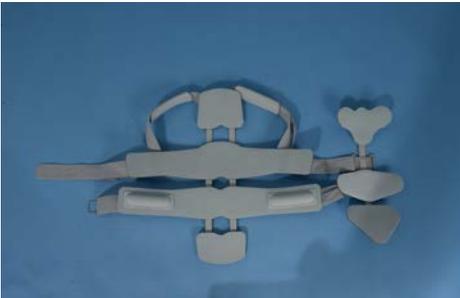
## When do I stop wearing the brace?

You will need to continue to wear the brace until it is clear that the fracture or damage to your spine is healed. Your Consultant will give you exact dates depending on your injury.

It is best that you gradually wean yourself off using the brace at the end of treatment by spending one to two hours without it in the morning and afternoon. Some days you may need to use it all day.

Most people take around two weeks to feel comfortable without the brace completely.

### Diagram of MKS Thorecta Plus



### How to put the MKS Thorecta Plus brace on and take off:

1. Lie on your back, roll over onto your side and slide brace under and roll back onto it. You can choose either side to roll onto, undo the top and bottom strap on the front section only on one side to open the brace and maintain the sizing.



2. Now you should be lying on the brace with the front section to one side and straps open to the other.



3. Bring the front section across you, making sure the top of the section sits on your breast bone just under your collar bone.



4. To fasten the top strap, put the velcro tab through the loop and fasten it back over onto itself.



5. To fasten the bottom strap, place the metal loop onto the plastic clip and close firmly with a click sound. When both are fastened it should look like the picture below.



6. Roll onto your side and use your hand to push yourself up into a sitting position.



7. There are two 'backpack' straps to stop the brace slipping down when standing. Put your arms through these in sitting and secure them with velcro, sticking them onto the top strap of the mid-section.



You should not be able to slip your hand down the front of the brace too easily and it should feel secure.

After wearing the brace for 30 minutes to one hour, check your skin for any areas of excessive redness. Some redness is normal, but if it does not disappear after 30 minutes contact your Orthotist who will adjust the brace as necessary.

To remove brace, reverse the above procedure. You should only unfasten one side of the brace (one top and bottom strap) to maintain the fitting.

# MKS Thorecta Plus Care

## Do:

- Wear a t-shirt or vest beneath the brace for maximum comfort
- Follow your consultant's instructions about wearing the brace
- Tighten the brace to maintain comfortable snugness. This ensures the effectiveness of your brace
- Take care when bending, stretching, sitting or standing. You will be able to overpower the brace so reduce the need to do any movements other than what the brace allows you to do easily.

## Don't:

- Remove the brace unless staff tell you to remove it.
- Put anything inside your brace.
- Take part in active sports.
- Engage in any physical activity that causes excessive pain.
- Cut or damage your brace. However, should you experience any discomfort, please contact your therapist or Orthotist.
- Use any solvents or abrasive cleaning agents on your brace.
- Put the brace close to a direct source of heat.

## Any Problems?

If you notice any of the following problems, contact the GGC referral management appointment booking centre on ☎ 0800 592 087 or ✉ [email appointmentsbookingcentre@ggc.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:appointmentsbookingcentre@ggc.scot.nhs.uk). They can arrange an appointment with an orthotist who will review the brace.

- Brace is loose, cracked or broken.
- Brace rubs, presses or pinches, causing irritation.

- Brace is loose and cannot be easily adjusted.
- Brace is tight and cannot be easily adjusted.
- Moderate discomfort changes to severe and constant pain.
- Skin or wound problems such as offensive odour develops or excessive itching develops beneath the brace.

If in doubt, it is safest to stay in bed until you are able to contact the department where your brace was supplied for advice or the problem with your brace is resolved.

## **Commonly Asked Questions**

All injuries are different. If you have similar or specific questions, please do not hesitate to check with your Orthotist or Consultant.

### **How long do I need to wear the brace for?**

Usually you wear the brace for 12 weeks after being fitted. Your consultant will tell you when the brace will be removed.

### **How do I dress myself?**

Put a T-shirt on while lying in bed before putting the brace on and then dress as you would normally. Take care not to twist your body.

### **How do I bath or shower?**

Your Occupational Therapist will discuss this before you go home. We advise you to sit while you shower and if you are allowed to take the brace off, that you avoid bending or twisting.

## **When can I lift objects and what weight is OK?**

Avoid lifting and trying to bend when wearing the brace. Simple domestic objects are OK but avoid heavy weights.

## **When can I return to physical activities?**

Avoid impact sports for one year after any serious spinal injury. Regular exercise is beneficial to a rapid recovery. You can expect some discomfort after you start exercising due to lack of fitness.

You can start rhythmic and low impact stamina and strength exercises as soon as comfortable for upper and lower limbs e.g. exercise bike, walking.

## **What sport can I do and when can I start?**

You cannot take part in any sports when wearing a brace. We recommend regular walking while wearing the brace. You can start progressive exercises after the brace is removed e.g. swimming, cycling etc.

## **How far can I walk?**

Frequent short walks are recommended but do not cause yourself any pain. Most patients experience some muscle discomfort when they start regular activities. This should settle within 24 hours. If it continues check with your Doctor.

## **When can I start driving?**

Fitness to drive is the responsibility of the individual who should comply with the law and insurance requirements. You should not drive when wearing the brace. You should limit journeys as a passenger to one hour. If longer distances are unavoidable then take regular breaks to give yourself a chance to stretch and go for a short walk. You should check with your insurance company to find out when you can start driving once you have stopped wearing the brace.

## **When can I travel or fly?**

There are no medical restrictions in travelling or flying in an MKS Thorecta Plus. You should limit the length of time sitting or standing to one hour with regular changes of position to ease discomfort and stiffness. Regular trips to the toilet are helpful in long plane or train journeys. If flying by plane you will set off security alarms which may result in a body search. A letter from your doctor or a copy of your X-rays will not prevent this as they can easily be forged.

## **When can I return to work?**

Please work together with your consultant, employer and occupational health department to understand when you are safe to return to work.

## **When can I have sexual intercourse?**

Sexual relations can start whenever your level of discomfort allows. Anxiety and apprehension for both partners at first is normal.

## **What positions should I avoid during intercourse?**

The spine is protected when you are lying on your back or side. It is best to avoid bending and twisting your spine for the first two months.

## **Further Information**

If you have any questions please ask the staff.





