



## What to Expect With Your Orthotic Patient Care Process

**orthosis** /or-tho-sis/ (or-tho´sis) pl. *ortho´ses* [Gr.] an orthopedic appliance or apparatus used to support, align, prevent, or correct deformities or to improve function of movable parts of the body.

Prosthetic & Orthotic Associates Inc. (POA) wants to make your experience being fitted with an orthotic device as easy and painless as possible. We are dedicated to you, our patients, and strive to provide the superior care you deserve. Most orthotic braces are covered by insurance with some exceptions. One of our team members will inform you of your financial responsibility after you've been evaluated by the orthotist.

## Receiving Your Custom Orthosis

The following information will help you better understand the process you will go through to get your orthosis. Our orthotic care program consists of six basic steps: **Evaluation, Authorization, Casting, Diagnostic Fitting, Fit and Delivery, and Follow-up**. Usually each visit occurs one to two weeks apart but your actual visit timing may vary.

It is important to remember that every individual is different and will progress through the process at different rates depending on the severity of injury, prior functional level, and compliance with the treatment program. It can be a challenging journey, but with desire, commitment, and the proper treatment, you can return to the highest level of function possible.

Your doctor will decide when you are sufficiently healed and ready to begin the process. Your prescribing physician will need to have sufficient documentation on file to comply with your insurance company's policy guidelines. Your physical therapist will also be included in the treatment team to help you learn how to live a normal life.

## Visit One – Evaluation



During your first visit, we will gather a wide range of background information from and about you. This includes details like your height, weight, age, prescribing physician, and medical history.

During this visit, we will discuss your functional intentions and plan in detail. We encourage you to be prepared to engage in a conversation about what you would like to accomplish. This conversation will help us to help you. If you have uncertainty about these desires, we are here to provide answers and direction in this self-discovery process.

Some insurance companies require that we get prior authorization before we start the process of creating your custom orthosis. If this is the case, we will do only the evaluation at this appointment. Once we get the insurance authorization, we will contact you to make an appointment for your Casting Visit.



## Insurance Authorization

Once your treatment plan has been formalized, we must take a number of administrative steps prior to moving forward with the creation of your orthosis and moving through the rehabilitation process. The first step includes verifying insurance coverage. With most insurance companies, orthotic services are listed under the Durable Medical Equipment clause of your policy.

We will work directly with your doctor to create a detailed prescription that will specify the patient care services that you will receive. It is your treating physician's records, not the orthotist's records, which are used to establish medical necessity by insurance payers. The more quickly this information can be provided to us by your physician, the faster your orthotic process will be. **Without your physician's record about you, we will be unable to make your orthosis.**

Once the necessary documentation is collected, we will submit an authorization request to your insurance company (if required). The time needed to review the information varies with each payer and can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. In the event of a denial of authorization, we will make every effort to appeal the insurance payer's decision on your behalf.

As part of our commitment of service to you, we will verify your orthotic coverage and review the information with you. However, insurance authorization is not a guarantee of full payment by the insurance company. As a result of this process, our office will provide you with a preliminary estimate of the costs of these orthotic services and how they will be split between the insurance company and you. Your patient payment portion is subject to change based on final claim determination.

## Visit Two – Casting

To create your custom brace, we will need a mold of the affected body part. This can be as easy as getting a set of measurements or as complicated as needing a "cast". If we need a cast, we will capture your individual shape by either using plaster to "cast" the shape of your limb or we will use our Computer Aided Design (CAD) system to digitally capture your shape details. It is very important that your body not be swollen when we take a cast to make your orthotic device. If you are swollen, we will need to make another appointment for the casting.



## Visit Three – Initial Fitting and Adjustment

Based upon your individual cast, your custom orthotic device will be custom-made by hand, and is a highly skilled craft that takes a bit of time. We will create a "diagnostic orthosis" that matches the shape of your body as a clear, plastic device that allows your clinician to determine the fit of the orthosis specifically to you. Achieving the correct fit of the orthotic device is critical to allowing you to live the most active life possible.

Depending on the situations encountered during this appointment, you might need another diagnostic device to optimize your results. If this occurs, you will need to have an additional visit.



## Visit Four – Fitting and Delivery



During this appointment, you will be fit with your new, final orthosis that you will be taking home to use every day. As a part of this process, your orthotist will spend time with you to be sure that you are educated on the proper donning of your orthosis, know how to use the features of your new device, and how to determine if your orthosis is no longer fitting well.

If this is your first orthosis, do not expect to wear your new orthotic brace all of the time right away. We recommend wearing your custom device for 1-3 hours the first day and gradually increasing the wear time by an hour each day. You should check the skin on your body often for signs of irritation or redness. Redness over a large area that dissipates after removal of the orthosis is usually normal. If you have localized redness caused by pressure, please contact our facility for an appointment so that changes to the orthotic device can be made. We also highly recommend that you begin to work immediately with a local physical or occupational therapist to maximize your rehab process.

If you begin to experience discomfort, remember that your definitive orthosis has not changed. It is more likely that your body has undergone a physical change. Often this discomfort can be relieved by your orthotist through minimal changes or adding or removing padding.

## Follow Up Visits

Your first Follow Up appointment will be scheduled for 1-2 weeks after the delivery of your definitive orthosis. Follow Up appointments will allow your orthosis to continue assessing the fit and function of your new orthotic device as you begin to use it and your activity levels change over time. During these appointments, we will discuss what may or may not be working for you, and we will make necessary changes to ensure your comfort and satisfaction.

## Receiving an Off-the-Shelf Orthosis

If your doctor prescribed a non-custom device or an off-the-shelf orthosis, your wait for your device can be much shorter. We do provide a limited number of prefabricated devices from our in-house inventory so it is sometimes possible for you to receive your brace the day of your initial visit but that timing will be impacted by your specific insurance payer.

If we do not have a prescribed non-custom brace in stock, we can order it for you. Delivery may take up to two weeks after we receive your insurance approval, but if you would like to receive your brace sooner than that, we can arrange for expedited shipping at an additional charge.

Off-the-Shelf Orthoses are considered one-time-use products so once the device leaves our office, it is non-returnable unless there is a manufacturer defect. If the brace is defective, we will exchange it for the same type of product.