

Information about the

# Aspen Vista 464 Brace



Department of Orthotics  
Tel No: 0141 347 8909

## **Use of an Aspen Vista 464 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. This can be achieved with a non-surgical approach (bedrest or brace), surgical internal fixation or a combination. One of the most commonly used braces in keeping with current evidence based practice is Aspen Vista 464.

### **Aim of the Aspen Vista 464:**

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

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

You usually wear the brace from the day of your surgery or as soon as possible after the damage to your spine occurs. You may have to wear the brace for up to 3 months.

Sometimes your Consultant may extend or reduce this time. An experienced Orthotist will measure and fit the correct size of brace. 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 you wear the brace?**

You should wear the brace at all times and put it on or take it off as advised by your consultant or the MDT. You should always wear a cotton t-shirt or vest under the brace for comfort. Steps on how to put it on are in the following pages.

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

You will need to continue to wear the brace until it is clear that the fracture or damage 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 Aspen Vista 464



### How to put the Aspen Vista 464 brace on and take off:

1. Lie on your back, roll over onto your right side and slide brace under and roll back onto it.



2. Now you should be lying on the brace with a flap on the right and left flap with chest piece attached. If this has been successfully done then go to number 4.

3. If you are not able to do this then bend your knees and use your feet to bridge your back while keeping your spine straight. Slide the brace underneath your lower back and pull upwards until the lower end of the brace is in line with the top of your buttocks. It is safe to do this movement as described.



4. Bring the left flap and chest piece around you, make sure the chest piece sits on your breast bone just under your collar bones

5. Bring the right flap around and secure on top of the left.



6. Pull the rubber toggles at either side around your stomach in the opposite direction to which they came from, you should feel the brace tighten around your stomach.

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



8. Fasten the clips which come from the back of the brace under your underarms to the front chest piece of the brace, secure tightly.



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



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

To remove the brace, reverse the above procedure.

## **Aspen Vista 464 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 out-with what the brace allows.

### **Don't:**

- Remove the brace unless the staff tell you to.
- 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, call 0141 347 8909, and we can arrange an appointment with the orthotist to review your 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 or excessive itching which develops beneath the brace.

If in doubt remain 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?**

You generally wear the brace for 6-12 weeks after being fitted. Your consultant will tell you when to remove the brace at the clinic review.

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

Put a t-shirt or vest 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 bathe 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 so that you avoid bending or twisting.

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

Avoid lifting where possible and bend your knees if you cannot avoid this. Simple domestic objects are OK but you should not lift 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 when you start exercising due to lack of fitness.

You should 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?**

Sporting activities should not be undertaken whilst in the brace, however, regular walking is recommended. You can start progressive exercise once the brace has been removed, eg. Swimming, cycling etc.

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

Frequent short walks are recommended but pay attention not to 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 avoid driving when wearing the brace as this limits your ability to move as normal, however, if you choose to drive wearing the brace you must disclose this to your insurer and check your insurer will still cover you in case of an accident while driving with the brace on. Journeys as a passenger should be limited to one hour. If longer distances are unavoidable then regular breaks should be taken to give yourself a chance to stretch and go for a short walk.

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

There are no medical restrictions in travelling or flying in an Aspen Vista 464. The length of time sitting or standing should be limited 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 decide when you are safe to return to work.

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

Sexual relations can commence whenever the level of discomfort permits. 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**

For further information please to go to

<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/your-health/health-services/orthotics/>



## **How to Contact Us**

Call the Referral Management Centre on:

**0141 347 8909**

Or email:

**AHP.Appointments@ggc.scot.nhs.uk**

**This number should be used for all enquiries from the following clinics:**

Gartnavel General Hospital

Glasgow Royal Infirmary

Queen Elizabeth University Hospital

New Stobhill Hospital

New Victoria Hospital

Vale of Leven Hospital

Royal Alexandra Hospital

Inverclyde Royal Hospital

Renfrew Health and Social Care Centre



