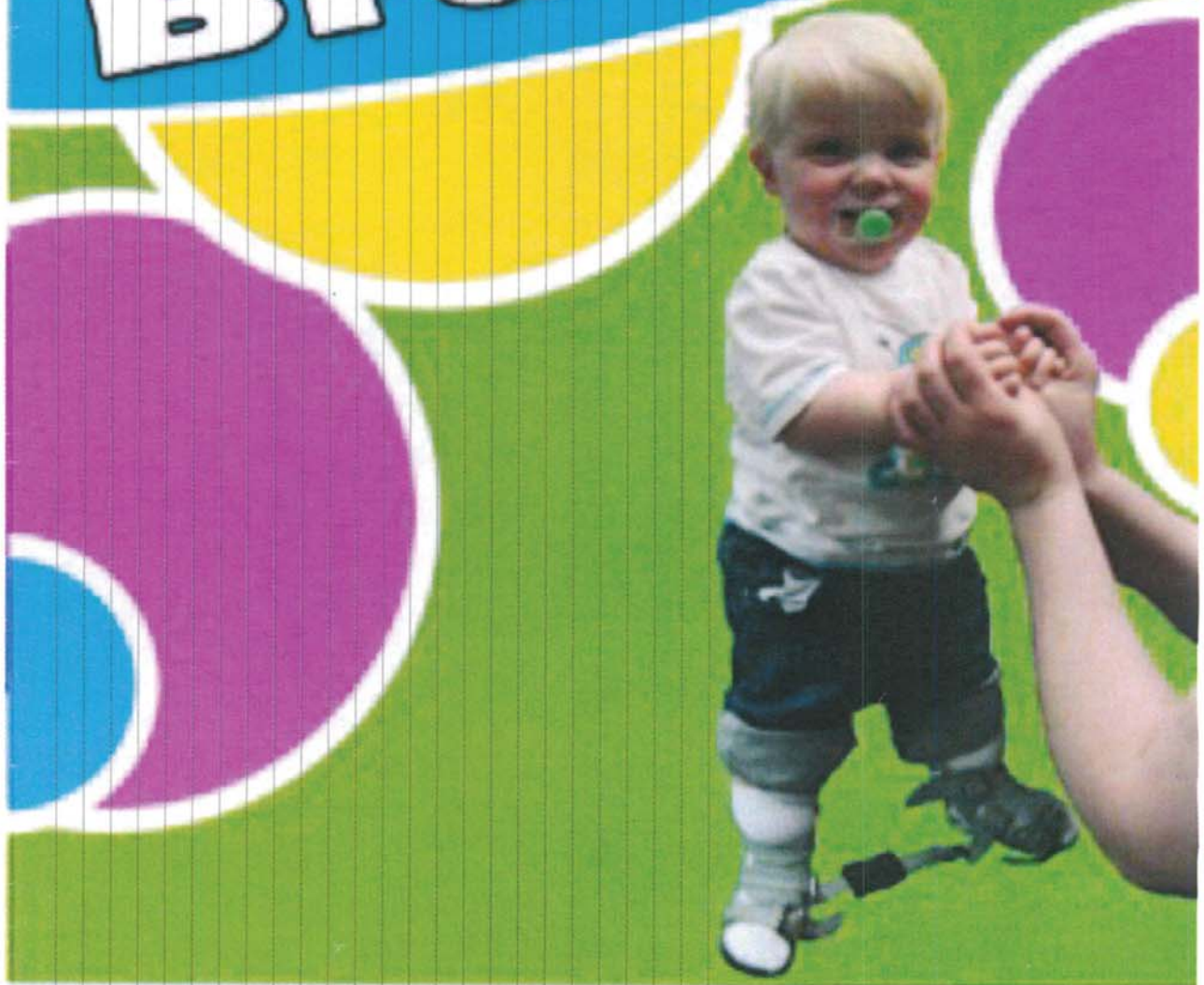


**Ready!  
Set!  
Brace!**



**The Parent's Guide for  
Successful Bracing!**



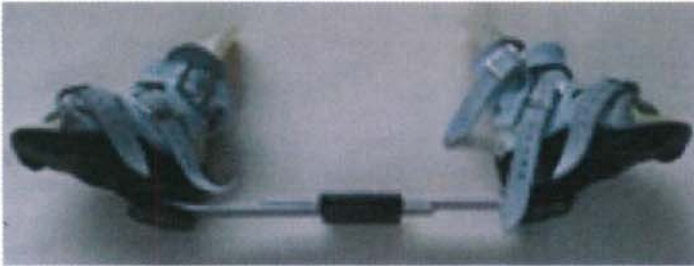
**UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**  
**CARVER COLLEGE**  
**OF MEDICINE**

University of Iowa Health Care



**PONSETI**  
INTERNATIONAL

# What is a clubfoot brace?



Casting and bracing are the two stages of clubfoot treatment.

- ❑ After your child's foot has been corrected with casts, they will need to wear a brace to prevent a **clubfoot relapse**. A **relapse** means the foot is turning back to the clubfoot.
- ❑ The bar and shoes work together to keep the stretch and flexibility the foot gained while in the casts.

We know having your child wear the brace may not be the easiest thing, but we hope you will learn that it is very important to make the brace part of you and your child's routine!

# Why is bracing important?

If the brace is not used, your child's clubfoot will relapse. Families who do not use the brace the way their doctor advises are **183 times** more likely to have a relapse!\*

- ❑ **If the brace is not worn for the right amount of time:**
- ❑ **9 out of 10 children** will relapse during the first year.\*
- ❑ **7 out of 10 children** will relapse during the second year.\*
- ❑ **3 out of 10 children** will relapse during the third year.\*



# Why is bracing important?



- The foot grows fast early in life. This means it is important to use the brace for the right amount of time each day.
- It is important to make using the brace a daily habit. Even a few nights out of the brace will make your child used to their legs moving freely at night. The next time they are in the brace they will be more fussy and have to learn how to sleep in the brace again.

**Treating a relapse** often means more casts when your child can walk. They may also need a small surgery if the relapse happens after age 3.

**The bracing schedule will start over after the relapse is fixed!**

# What is the bracing schedule?

- Your child will start wearing the brace the day the last cast is removed.
- The brace will be worn **23 hours a day** for the first **3 months**. Most parent use the hour the child is out of the brace for bathing time.
- After 3 months your child will wear the brace 16 to 18 hours a day.
- The time in the brace will keep decreasing as your child becomes more active. When your child can walk they will wear the brace 10 to 12 hours at night. This is the goal until they are 5 years old!

- If your child is already crawling or walking talk to your child's doctor about how long they should wear the brace!



# Putting The Brace On

**Step1:** Put thin cotton socks on your child. The socks should go up higher on your child's leg than the top buckle on the shoe.

**Step2:** Push all the flaps on the shoe back and slide your child's heel to the back and bottom part of the shoe. The buckles on the shoe should be on the inside part of your child's foot.



**Step 3:** Pull the tongue over the foot. Make sure this piece is lying flat and smooth across the foot.

**Step 4:** Buckle the middle strap first! Check that the strap is buckled snugly over the ankle.

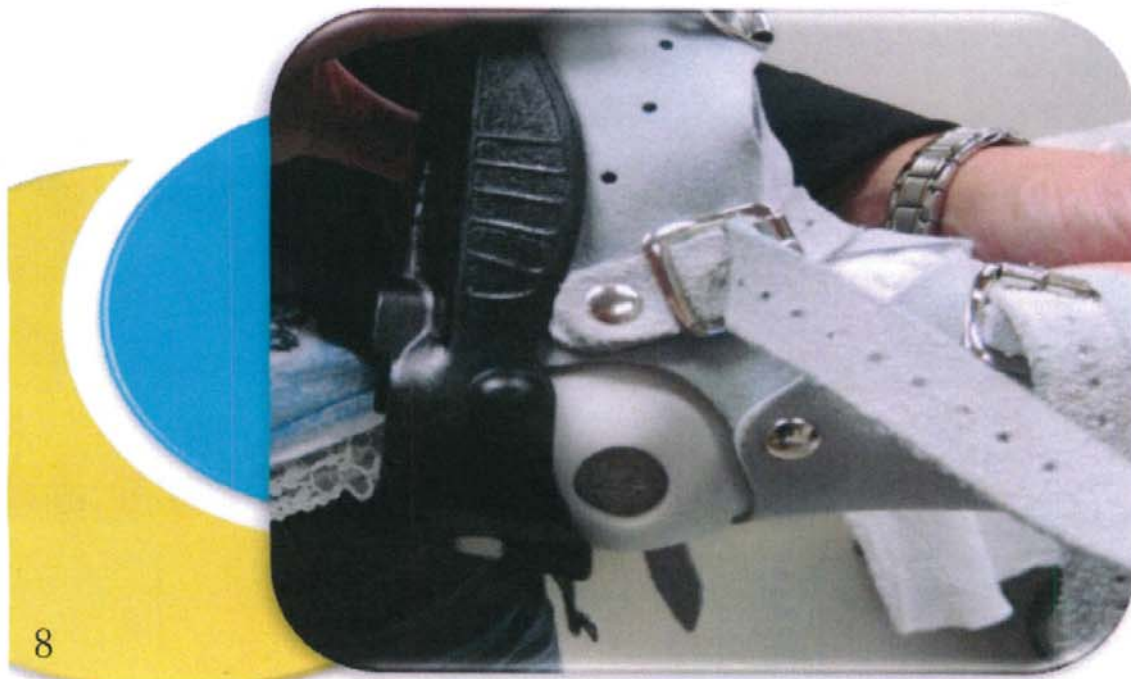


# Putting The Brace On

**Step 5:** Buckle the top strap that goes over the ankle and the bottom strap that goes over the toes

**Step 6:** Look through the holes in the heel of the shoe.

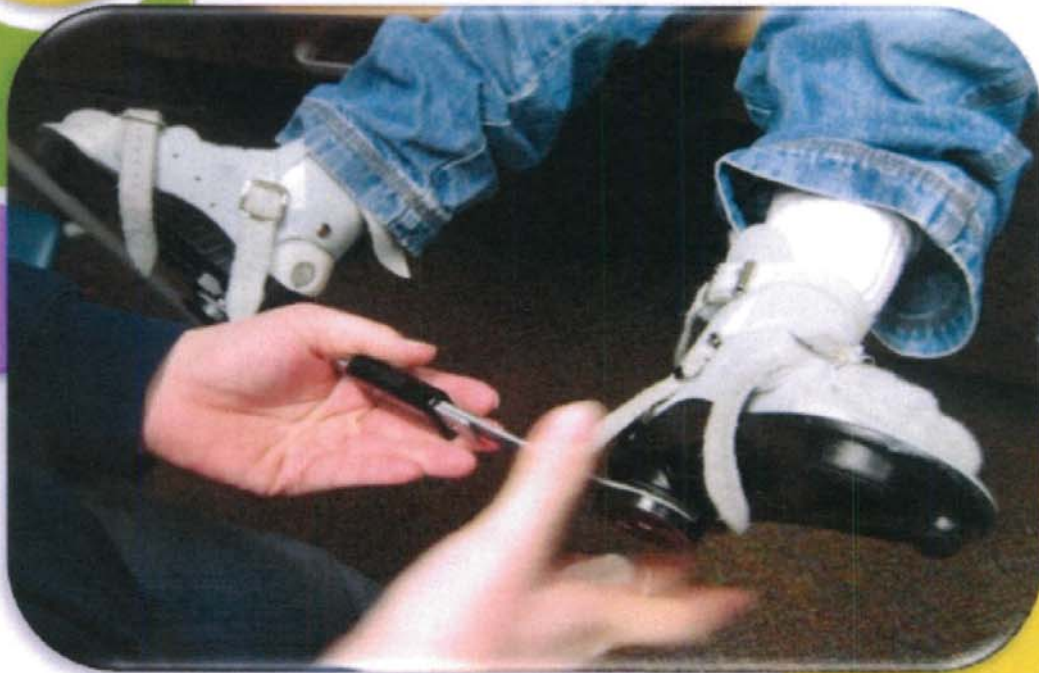
- Make sure that your child's heel is as far down and back in the shoe as possible.
- Readjust the tongue and middle strap until the foot is in the shoe the right way.
- Retighten any straps that may have come loose.





**Step 7:** Repeat for the other shoe!

**Step 8:** Click the shoes onto the bar. The “Ponseti” logo on the bar should be facing up.

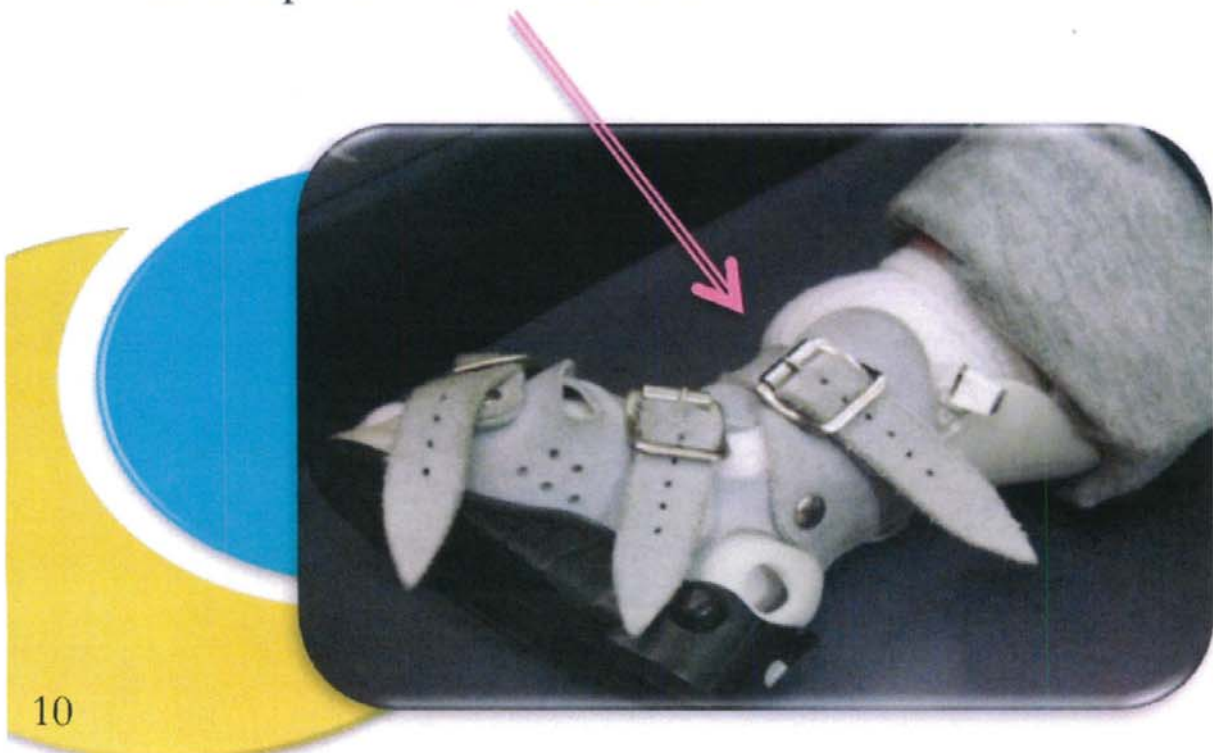


# Healthy Skin in the Brace

- Always have your child wear soft, thin socks in the shoes.
- Protect sore areas while they heal. Some parents will use moleskin for extra padding while a sore heals. You can find this at a pharmacy
- If a sore does not heal quickly, call your child's doctor!

## What is Normal?

- Redness that goes away in about 20 minutes.
- Your child's ankle and foot may be smaller where the straps of the shoes sit.



## What is Not Normal?

### □ Redness or Blisters

□ When any shoes are not fitting someone right, they are bound to get redness or blisters. Some reasons why this may happen are:

- **The straps are too loose.** This is the most common reason!
  - Your child has outgrown the shoes
  - The straps may be too tight
  - Fabric of the shoes or socks is not smooth against the skin
- Talk to your child's doctor if redness does not go away within 20 minutes.



# Bracing Tips From Other Parents

**Make it your routine!**  
**It gets easier with practice!**

- ❑ Your child will crawl and walk when they are supposed to even though they are using the brace!
- ❑ Almost all parents who have success with the brace say they made it part of their bedtime routine.

## Play with your child in the brace

- ❑ Your child may cry at first because they are not used to the brace holding their legs together. It is not because they are in pain.
- ❑ You can soothe your child and help them get used to the brace with a few exercises:
  - ❑ Gently move the bar up and down
  - ❑ Push and pull the brace to help your child learn how to bend their knees in the brace.

- ❑ **Do not remove the brace to soothe your child.** Your child will quickly learn that crying will lead to you removing the brace. This is a hard cycle to change!
- ❑ If you think your child is in a great deal of pain, call your child's doctor.

## Car Seats & Strollers

- ❑ **Short trips, less than 30 minutes:**

You can leave the shoes on and just take the bar off to put your child in and out of the car seat or stroller.



- ❑ **Long trips, more than 30 minutes:**
  - ❑ Take the bar off when fastening the child in the car seat or stroller. Snap the bar back on when the child is safely in the seat.

# Bracing Tips From Other Parents

## Padding the Bar

- ❑ Wrap pipe insulation around the bar to pad it.
- ❑ This will make it more comfortable when you hold, carry, or feed your child. It will protect your child, you, and your furniture, when your child moves.



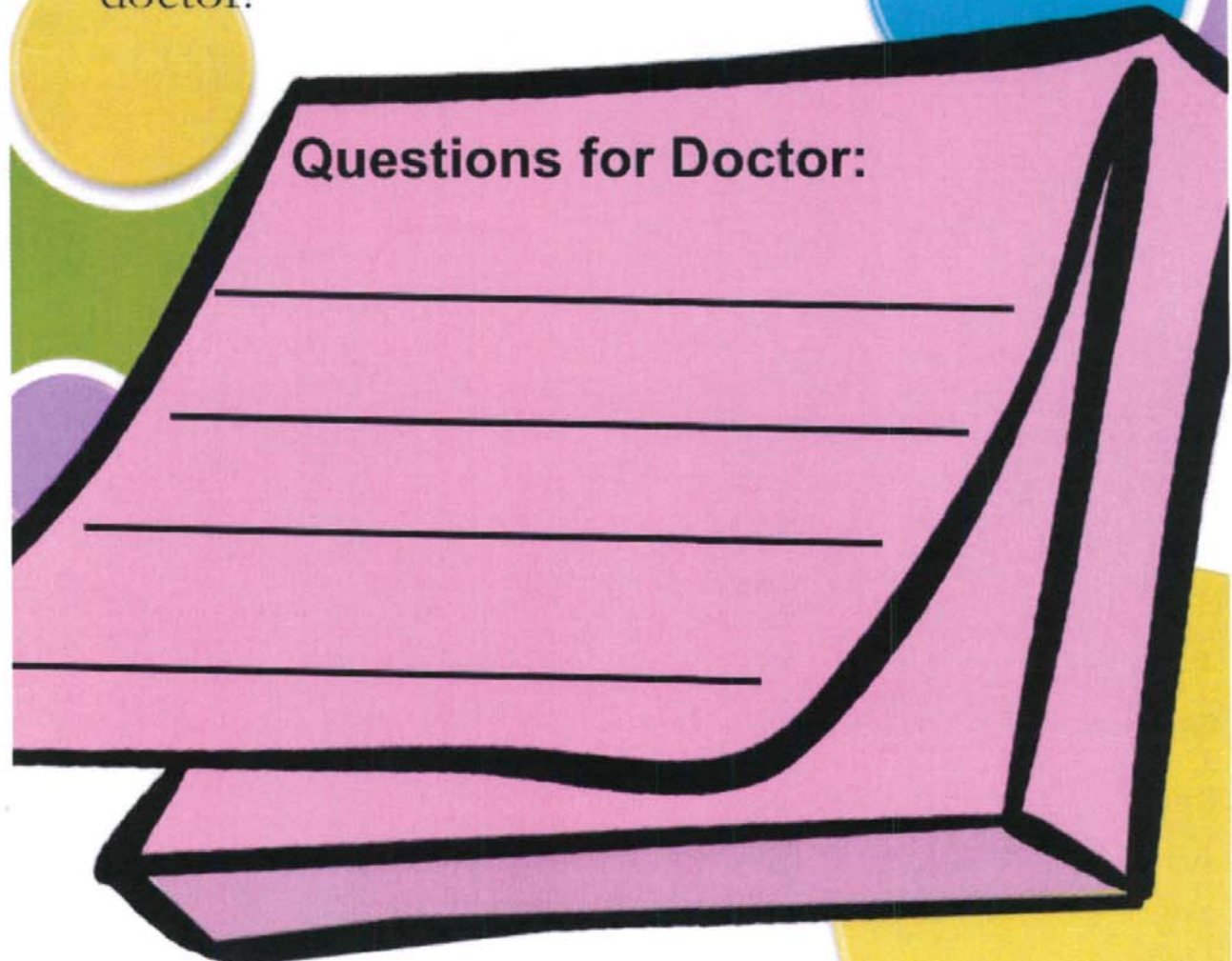
## Pick clothes that make using the brace simpler:

- ❑ Parents find onesies with snaps are easiest for working around the brace.
- ❑ Do not use onesies with footies when wearing the brace. The extra material from the footies may rub the skin and cause sores.

# Please Ask Us Questions!

- ❑ As you read this brochure and learn more about the brace, please write down any questions or concerns you can think of.
- ❑ Bring this brochure to your child's next clubfoot visit and talk about it with your child's doctor!

**Questions for Doctor:**



A pink, 3D-style notepad with four horizontal lines for writing. The notepad is tilted and has a thick black outline. It is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page, overlapping a yellow shape at the bottom right. The background features a blue horizontal bar at the top, a purple shape on the right, and a yellow circle on the left.

# For More Information:

There is a lot to know when getting you and your child ready for the bracing period. Take the time to ask your child's doctor any questions you may have about the brace

Remember the time and effort you put into helping your child wear the brace will put your child one step closer to corrected and pain free feet!

## Visit These Websites!

- <http://www.ponseti.info/v1/>
- <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/clubfootoverview/htm/index.htm>

## Join a Parent Blog!

- <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/nosurgery4clubfoot/>

\*Dobbs MB, Rudzki JR, Purcell DB, et al. Factors predictive of outcome after use of the Ponseti Method for the treatment of idiopathic clubfeet. J Bone Joint Surg [Am] 2004; 86-A:22-27