



Information for
patients and
carers

Halo Jacket System

Patient Passport

Please bring this document to all appointments

Patient name:
Consultant:
Date of Birth:
Hospital Number:

About your injury

The spinal column is made up of bones (vertebra), which are all stacked on top of one another. In between each bone is a soft cushion (disc) which acts as a shock absorber. The bones form a circle and provide protection for the spinal cord and nerves.

You have suffered an injury to the upper most section of the spinal column, known as the cervical spine. This has caused instability of the spine and there is a risk of damage to your spinal cord. To prevent spinal cord injury and promote healing of the bones, the spine needs to be immobilised.

This is why you have been fitted with a halo jacket system.

About your halo jacket system

The halo jacket system is designed to hold your neck, to allow the bones time to heal in the same way as a plaster cast would do for a broken leg. It stays in place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is made of titanium and graphite, which makes it very strong.

The system is made up of three parts:

- The ring goes around your head and is held in place by 4 or more pins that sit into the outer layer of the skull.

- The vest is made of plastic and is lined with a soft wool liner that will allow your skin to breathe.
- The superstructure is made up of rods and blocks which connect the ring and vest and support the neck position.

Caring for your halo system at home:

Pin Care

The pins that connect the ring to your head need to be cleaned daily. This is extremely important to prevent infection. The areas should be cleansed with betadine wash and gauze, which will be given to you before discharge. The skin around the pin should be pushed away from the pin gently, which will reduce scarring. A member of nursing staff will teach you how to do this before you go home, or in some cases a district nurse can be arranged to attend and perform this care.

Some pain and discomfort at the pin sites is to be expected at first, however; if the pain becomes extreme or if you notice any of the following signs please contact us immediately:

- Increased redness around the pin sites
- Leakage or weeping from the pin sites
- Additional tenderness around the pin sites

Vest care

The vest lining should be kept dry at all times.

Over time the vest may become too loose or too tight. If this happens, please contact the occupational therapy department for an appointment

to make adjustments. Do not make any modifications to the vest on your own.

If you notice any loose screws on the vest, contact us immediately.

Personal Care

Showering or bathing is not advised as there is no feasible way to keep the vest lining dry. We recommend a sponge bath with towels around the vest to keep it dry.

The best way to wash your hair is to lay on a flat surface with your head over the edge and a friend or relative assisting to wash the hair. To prevent water splashing onto the vest, cover it with plastic or towels.

Physiotherapy Guidelines

Be mindful of the height and width of the halo when you go home; be especially careful about width of doorways and negotiating transfers in and out of a car.

Throughout the daytime take regular gentle exercise, you are advised to get up and move around at least every 2 hours and to avoid prolonged periods of sitting of no longer than 30 minutes at a time.

Gradually increase the distances you walk remembering that the halo is heavy and that you need to pace yourself.

Periods of mobility should always be interspersed with rest, both sitting and lying.

Appointments

The halo jacket system will need to be checked regularly to ensure it continues to effectively hold your spine in place. You will be given appointments every 2 to 4 weeks and will undergo repeat x-rays and/or CT scans at some of these appointments. We appreciate that this may be a long journey for some people; however it is important that you attend all appointments.

Driving

You are not permitted to drive whilst wearing your halo jacket.

Appointment Record

Date	Time	Place	Comments

Record of Interventions

Date	Weeks in System	Interventions	Further instructions	Signature and Print

Contact information following discharge:

The clinical nurse specialist can be contacted on: 01772 524934.

An answer machine service is available which will be checked regularly and we will aim to return your call as soon as possible. If you have an URGENT enquiry, please contact the ward you were discharged from and ask to speak to the Nurse in Charge who can direct your enquiry to the most appropriate person. If your pins become loose, please contact the nurse specialist or ward immediately.

The occupational therapy team can be contacted on: 01772 522380.

In case of Emergency

IMPORTANT: this system is in place to protect the spinal cord from an unstable cervical spine. Once the system is released full spinal precautions should be adhered to.

In case of cardiac distress, follow the steps below:

- Lay the patient on a flat surface on their back
- Loosen and release the side waist buckles
- Fold the vest back at the crease in the shell to expose the sternum

The patient has been given an Allen Key, which can be used to loosen any components of the system necessary in an emergency situation.

If found, please return to:

Spinal Nurse Specialist
Department of Neurosurgery
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
Royal Preston Hospital
Sharoe Green Lane, PR2 9HT

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site.

On 31 May 2017 Lancashire Teaching Hospitals became a smoke-free organisation. From that date smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking including Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal. If you want to stop smoking you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Cantonese:

如果你希望以另外一種格式接收該資訊，請和我們聯絡，不必猶豫。

Gujarati:

જો તમને આ માહિતી બીજી રચના કે ફોર્મેટમાં મેળવવાની ઈચ્છા હોય, તો કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક કરતા અચકાશો નહિ.

Hungarian:

Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot, ha más formában kéri ezt az információt.

Polish:

Jeżeli chciał(a)by Pan/Pani otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt.

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਝਿਜਕੋ।

Urdu:

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو کسی اور صورت میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کرنے میں ہچکچاہٹ محسوس نہ کریں۔

Department: Neurosurgery

Division: Surgery

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