

# HALO

Cervical Orthosis

## ***Care & Wearing Instructions***



DELATORRE  
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*You have just been fitted with a HALO Cervical orthosis from De La Torre Orthotics and Prosthetics, Inc. This device is designed to keep you from moving your head and neck.*

*The most common question asked about the HALO is, “How long will I have to wear it?” Only your doctor can answer this question.*

*If you have other questions or concerns about the device itself, please contact one of our offices directly.*

For the first few days after your HALO has been applied, it may feel heavy and awkward. Your body will quickly adapt to the additional weight (approx. 5 1/2 pounds). We recommend you remain as active as possible for your physical and mental well-being. ***You must avoid activities that involve running, jumping, heavy lifting, and any activity where the inability to turn your head would jeopardize your safety*** (such as driving a car). As a precaution, please contact your doctor before participating in any questionable activities.

Additionally, it is at the doctor’s discretion when you will be able to return to school or work.

## **HALO REMOVAL**

Your physician will determine the length of time you will need to wear the HALO. When the time comes to remove the HALO you will most likely be fit with a cervical collar. The muscles in your neck have not been used a great deal since your HALO was applied, therefore, your head will feel heavy to you.

This collar should be worn until your physician says you may discontinue its use. Your physician will also determine your timetable for returning to normal activities. Once the HALO is removed, you should continue to clean the pin sites as you previously did until each site has closed.

The sites should be massaged to break any adhesions which may have formed between the skin and the bone. This is done to reduce scarring. You do not want to let scabs form at the sites on your forehead. The pinholes should be left open to the air unless you are going to be in a particularly dirty environment. Soap, water, and shampoo will not hurt your pin sites.



## CLOTHING

If it is your preference, you may wear a cotton T-shirt under the vest. The seams from the neck to the armholes can be split. The shirt is then pulled up under the bottom of the vest and the shoulders refastened with pins, Velcro or buttons. A bra that is a larger size than what you normally wear may be worn under the HALO. The bra is slid up under the front of the vest between the breasts and the straps are secured on the outside of the back half of the vest.

Finding clothing to wear over the vest can be a challenge. Shirts or blouses with front buttons or zippers usually work best. In cold weather you may need a coat that is several sizes larger than normal. You will not be able to wear a hat but scarves are very useful. One can be wrapped around your ears and head, and another around you neck.

Only flat shoes or boots should be worn while wearing your HALO device. Women should never attempt to wear high-heeled shoes as they alter your balance and may cause you to fall.

## SLEEP

You may sleep on your back or side while in your HALO, whichever is more comfortable. Use extra pillows to help position yourself. When you rise from a lying down position it is best to roll to one side and use your arms to push yourself up. If you sit up by bending at the waist it can put extra stress on your pin sites.

**CAUTION: Never allow anyone to pull on the HALO vest or uprights in order to move you. This will put tremendous stress on your pins possibly causing them to slip out of position.**

## PIN CARE

Daily care of the pin sites is vital to help prevent infection. **At NO time should the pins be loosened or removed.** Each pin should be cleaned 2-3 times daily with a mixture of 50 percent saline solution and 50 percent hydrogen peroxide. This is to be done with a cotton swab or Q-tip and may require the assistance of another person. The skin around the pin sites is to be massaged away from the pin to prevent it from adhering to the pin. This will help minimize scarring. Any crust or scabbing should be removed to allow drainage. Some possible signs of infection are pain, inflammation, bleeding, or discharge of pus. If any of these symptoms occur or any of the pins feel loose, contact your physician immediately.

**NOTE: Do not place bacitracin or other ointments around the base of the pin as this may cause complications.**

## VEST CARE

The HALO vest is designed to fit snugly around your torso but allow for normal breathing and body movements. If you feel it has become too tight or loose, please contact De La Torre Orthotics & Prosthetics or your physician. **If you notice any loose screws on the vest, contact De La Torre Orthotics and Prosthetics *immediately*.**

Be aware that you may hear “creaking” sounds at times. This is normal. The graphite rods are secured to the ring and vest with nylon bushings which may “creak” when you move.

## **SAFETY FEATURES**

The HALO vest has two safety features. The first is a groove in the plastic across the sternum at chest level, which will allow the plastic to bend at that point. In the event that a physician needs access to your chest (ex: CPR) the side buckles just above your waist can be unbuckled, a hand placed above the groove and the lower part of the vest lifted causing it to pivot back and expose your chest area.

The second safety feature is an Allen wrench taped to the front of the vest. This can be used by a physician to remove the rods and allow the entire anterior half of the vest to be removed.

**These features are precautionary and are to be used only by a physician or emergency medical personnel in the event of a medical emergency!**

## **HYGIENE**

The HALO vest liner will usually last for the duration of your time in the HALO. It is important to keep it and your skin underneath it clean. **To wash your body** under the vest, use a washcloth or hand towel that has been wet with hot water and then wrung out. While lying on your back, wash under the front of the vest. To dry your body you may roll a hand towel up lengthwise and pull it back and forth under the vest. Lay on your stomach and have someone wash under the back half of the vest. Do not use soap, lotion or powder; these will irritate your skin and cause the liner to mat.

While cleaning under the vest inspect your skin for reddened areas or skin breakdown. Your shoulder blades (scapulas) are a vulnerable area to which you should pay close attention. If severe redness or skin breakdown exists, call a De La Torre Orthotics & Prosthetics office right away.

**To clean the rest of your body**, either take a sponge bath or sit in a tub with 2-3 inches of water. Be careful to keep your vest dry as you bathe by protecting it with plastic.

**To wash your hair**, lie on a flat surface such as a bed or couch with your head extending over the edge. Keep your head slightly lower than your body so water will run off your head and not down your vest. You should also put towels around the top of the vest and a basin under your head. Proceed to wash your hair as normal.

If you are able, you may kneel beside the bathtub and bend forward enough to have your head lower than your shoulders.

Shampoo will not hurt your pin sites, but they should be cleaned as **(see section on pin care)** once you have washed your hair. You should not use hair coloring or have a permanent while in your HALO as these can cause infection at your pin's sites.