

WHICH POSTOP BRACE TO USE?

Bledsoe Brace Systems manufactures so many different postoperative braces that it is sometimes difficult to decide which brace to use. In order to answer this question effectively, it is necessary to ask a few questions about the physician's practice. Does the physician treat a broad range of injury types including fractures? If so, and he is willing to stock three or four sizes in inventory along with a few shoe inserts and fracture treatment plates, the best solution is the original Bledsoe Brace. After all, if the physician is using 12 to 15 braces per month, stocking three or four sizes should not be any difficulty. The original Bledsoe Brace is available with two different hinges. We must now ask which is more important; rapid hinge adjustment or the ability to set infinite ranges of limited motion. The Bledsoe Multi-Centric Hinge can be set to infinite ranges of limited motion and tracks very close to the normal movement of the knee. The Bledsoe Simple Hinge is adjustable in 15° increments and is the quickest to adjust. The Bledsoe Brace is available in 2" increments from 22" - 34", but the 22", 24", 26", and 28" sizes will handle 95% of the patients. The Bledsoe Brace features plastic posterior plates to help distribute strap loads evenly, and optional anterior fracture plates are available for treating certain fracture categories. Shoe inserts, and a pelvic band attachment, are also available to complete the system. This remains one of the most versatile, comfortable, and cost-effective systems available for the broad range of treatments from postoperative bracing to cast replacement. The system also features the largest price discounts from the published retail price.

If the physician is treating only tibial plateau fractures, and knee ligament injuries or reconstructions, the remaining braces in our product line can be utilized. It is therefore necessary to ask another question. Is the physician willing to spend an extra two minutes adjusting the length of a brace to obtain maximum leverage? This will insure maximum control of the leg, will maintain vertical hinge position better without migration, and permit one brace to fit patients from 22" to 34" in leg length. If the answer is yes, the Bledsoe Adjustable Brace or the Bledsoe Postop should be chosen. There is still a choice of both hinge systems. Both of these braces are length adjustable, cool open

designs, and they can handle any leg circumference up to 34". To choose between them we must ask, "Is it more important to absolutely block the last 30° of extension, or is the ease of fitting the most important criterion?" If the answer is extension blockage, the Bledsoe Postop features a criss-cross network of straps behind the knee that become very tight in extension. Although a little more cumbersome to apply, this brace is the most effective brace ever designed for stopping extension. If ease of fitting is the more important factor, the Bledsoe Adjustable Brace is the answer. This length adjustable brace features separately adjustable anterior and posterior straps to permit some counter shear force to be placed across the knee joint for ACL or PCL injuries or reconstructions.

Physicians that routinely perform arthroscopic ACL reconstructions often require locking the hinge in full extension at night to prevent a flexion contracture. In this case, the Bledsoe Simple Hinge should be chosen along with the Quik-Lok option. The Quik-Lok option is a small cam lever that permits rapid locking in full extension in a rigid manner. It can always be locked rigidly since the cam can continue to be forced into the hinge as wear occurs. This is very important since small movements in a loose hinge can cause some spasms in postoperative knees. The Bledsoe Simple Hinge with the Quik-Lok option is also available in a hyperextension lock version. It features ranges of motion from -15° to 120° of flexion, with a hyperextension Quik-Lok at -10°. This permits placing some additional tension against the flaccid soft tissues to insure absolute maintenance of full knee extension.

If the biggest concern is stocking only one size brace, then three options are available. The Bledsoe Basic Brace features one regular length that will fit a majority of the patients. An extra long version for inseams that exceed 32" is available. An extra short version is also available for those patients that need only a gentle reminder. This brace features separately adjustable anterior and posterior straps which permits placing static counter shear force across the knee for ACL and PCL reconstructions. The Bledsoe OR Brace features one-piece circumferential straps for rapid application. The Bledsoe Cool OR Brace features a cool open design with combination padded straps

for rapid application.

Choosing the proper postoperative brace becomes a simple matter of determining what features are most important to the physician. By asking a few questions it becomes easy to make the proper determination. Sometimes, a little experimentation with a couple of different models will help finalize the answer. If the exact model of brace with the desired features is not in our current inventory, contact Bledsoe brace systems about making the right type of brace for the needs of the patient and the physician. We have several models that we manufacture with special modifications for certain customers.

There is a difference!

The difference is in the details!