

PIN SITE MANAGEMENT



You are now ready to leave hospital. Your external fixator and pin sites will require careful attention when you get home.

An external fixator is a device used to stabilise the position of a broken bone.

A pin site is “the area that a pin or wire enters or exits a limb”. Infection is a potential problem to the pin site area because the skin is broken.

This information will advise you on pin site management, prevention and treatment of infection at home and is to supplement the teaching you received in hospital.

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

All materials used should be for pin site care *only*. Each item must be washed and dried thoroughly with hot soapy water before and after use.

You will need:

- Stainless steel scissors
- Small clean container. This must be washed with hot soapy water before and after use and dried with paper towel.
- Use chlorhexidine (prescribed) solution OR cooled boiled water as a cleaning solution (this will be determined by your hospital nurse)
- Gauze square dressings
- Plastic clips or tape to secure dressings.

PREPARATION FOR DRESSING

- All pin sites *must* be inspected / cleaned on alternate days as shown by your hospital nurse.
- The person performing pin site care should wash their hands and nails thoroughly with liquid soap from a hand dispenser.
- Dry hands with paper towel.
- Set up for procedure as shown by your nurse whilst in hospital.
- Proceed to shower / bathe your child, if recommended by your nurse.
- Remove all old dressings and discard them.
- Inspect all pin sites.
- Wash hands again.



CLEANING YOUR PIN SITES

- Wet a gauze square with the chosen solution.
- Clean any necessary pin sites individually using separate gauze for each site.
- Clean the pin site by rotating the gauze firmly around the pin and surrounding skin, moving in one direction only.
- If there are crusts present, these should be gently removed during the cleaning process.
- If any pin site is oozing,
 - Apply a keyhole dressing as demonstrated by your hospital nurse.
 - Secure the dressings with some tape or clips provided.
- Clean scissors and any other equipment in a small container with liquid soap and hot water, then dry with a paper towel.
- Tidy away equipment and wash hands thoroughly.
- Sometimes you might notice that the pin sites are oozing a clear or yellow fluid. This is unlikely to be an infection.
- If this happens clean and dress all pin sites as you have been taught, but continue daily until the oozing has stopped.

INFECTION

Despite your very best efforts, an infection may occur.

Signs of infection may include:

- Pin sites may be red, painful and may be oozing
- Your child may have a temperature or may feel unwell



If you suspect an infection:

- Clean and dress daily as above
- Antibiotic therapy may be required.
- Consult with your hospital nurse by phone, as you will have been given a prescription when leaving the hospital to commence, in the event of an infection.

You may also visit your GP for advice.

For more information on [Pin Site Management](#), please contact Clinical Nurse Specialist, Limb Reconstruction, Phone: 01 409 6100 - Bleep 8754 (Mon - Fri). All other times, or CNSp unavailable Ring Orthopaedic Doctor on call: 01 409 6100 in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin, Dublin.

Remember: Ask your nurse if you are unsure about anything about your child's care.

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