

# Let's Talk ABOUT...

**Y**our child's doctor may have put pins in your child's broken bone keep the bone in place until it heals. The pins are small metal rods. They can be as thin as a large piece of wire to as thick as a pencil. The pins may be placed only in the bone, partially in the bone, or completely through the bone. Pin care is just cleaning the pins in a special way. The length of time your child has to have pins depends on why your child needs them. Ask your child's doctor how long your child needs to have pins.

## How often should I do pin care?

When your child has pins, it is very important to keep them clean to prevent infection. Ask your child's doctor how often you should clean your child's pins.

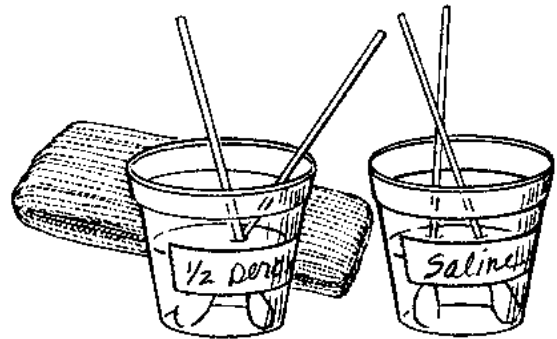
## How do I do pin care?

Your doctor may prescribe one or two types of solution to help you care for your child's pins: saline (a special salt water solution) and a cleaning solution or saline alone. Make sure you know the right solutions for your child. Your doctor will tell you what to use.

## If your doctor tells you to clean with both the saline solutions and the cleaning solution:

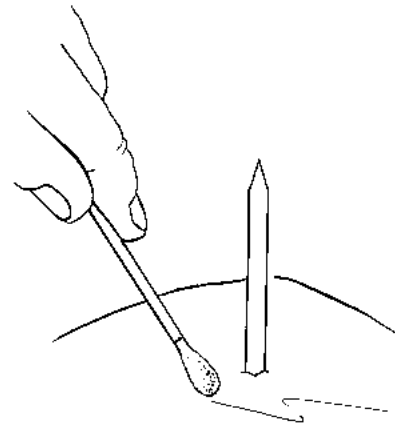
- 1 Gather all the materials you need:
  - Cleaning solution
  - Normal saline solution
  - Cotton-tip swabs (e.g. Q-tips®): You need two swabs for each pin.
  - Two small containers for the solutions
- 2 Wash your hands.
- 3 Look at the spot where the pins pass through the skin; it should look pink and healthy. Look for any areas of redness, pus, or increased pain at the site. Some of the pins may have areas

## Pins and pin care



where the skin is almost open. These areas should also look pink and healthy. Note any foul odor as you clean.

- 4 Pour the cleaning solution into one clean container and the normal saline into another. Label each container so you know which is which. Put half of the cotton swabs into one solution, half in the other.



- 5 Begin cleaning one pin at a time. Use a cotton swab with cleaning solution to wash the area around the pin. Begin where the pin enters the skin and move out away from the pin. Remove any old, dried blood or scales around the edge of the skin. You do not need to push the cotton swabs into the hole created by the pin. There

may be some slight bleeding from the areas that are open, but this is normal. The cleaning solution may foam when it touches the skin. This is normal.

- 6 Use a cotton swab with saline solution to wash the area around the pin. Use the same procedure described above.
- 7 If the pin is soiled, use a clean cotton swab and wash the pin from the base upward.
- 8 Use this same procedure with each of the pins.

### **If your doctor has given you saline solution only:**

- 1 Gather all the materials you need:
  - Normal saline solution.
  - Cotton-tip swabs (Q-tips). You need one for each pin.
  - One small container to put the solution in.
- 2 Wash your hands.
- 3 Look at the spot where the pins pass through the skin; it should look pink and healthy. Look for any areas of redness, pus, or increased pain at the site. Some of the pins may have areas where the skin is almost open. These areas should also look pink and healthy. Note any foul odor as you clean.
- 4 Pour the saline solution into the clean container.
- 5 Put the cotton swabs into the solution. You will need one cotton swab for each pin.
- 6 Begin cleaning one pin at a time. Use a cotton swab with cleaning solution to wash the area around the pin. Begin where the pin enters the skin and move out away from the pin. Remove any old, dried blood or scales around the edge of the skin. You do not need to push the cotton swabs into the hole created by the pin. There

may be some slight bleeding from the areas that are open, but this is normal. If the pin itself is soiled, use a clean cotton swab and wash the pin from the base upward.

### **Are there any complications from pins or pin care?**

The place where the pin enters the skin may become infected. If there is an infection, the area will be red and painful, and you may notice pus. If you see any signs of infection, call your child's doctor.

Your child may have pain and discomfort when you do pin care, especially in the beginning. Your child's doctor may prescribe a pain medicine. If not, ask your doctor what you can use. Try to give your child pain medicine 30 to 60 minutes before you begin pin care. This will help your child be more comfortable during the procedure.

Children are often anxious during pin care. You can help your child relax by showing her what you are doing and talking calmly with her. Allow her to help as much as possible.

### **Does my child have any restrictions while she has pins?**

Talk with your doctor about whether your child can swim or bathe with her pins.

### **When should I call my child's doctor?**

Call your child's doctor if:

- You have any questions about how to care for your child's pins.
- You notice redness, pus, or a foul odor around the pins.
- The pain medicines do not help your child's discomfort.