

## Let's Talk About...

# Pins and Pin care after surgery

Your child's surgeon may have put pins (small metal rods) in your child's broken bone to keep it in place until it heals. These pins and the skin around them need to be cleaned often so they don't get infected.

### How often should I do pin care?

Ask your child's healthcare provider how often you should clean your child's pins. Generally, you should clean the pin site twice a day.

### How do I do pin care?

Your child's healthcare provider will tell you to use one or two kinds of solutions to care for their pins: saline (a special salt water solution) and a cleaning solution or saline alone. Make sure you know which solutions are right for your child.

### Saline and cleaning solutions together:

- 1 Gather all the materials you need:
  - Cleaning solution
  - Normal saline solution
  - Cotton swabs (two swabs for each pin)
  - 2 small containers for the solutions

- 2 Wash your hands.
- 3 Look at the spots where the pins pass through the skin; they 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. Pay attention to 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 and half in the other.
- 5 Clean the area around one pin at a time. Using a cotton swab with cleaning solution, begin where the pin enters the skin and move out away from the pin. Remove any dried blood or scales around the edge of the skin. Don't push the cotton swabs into the hole created by the pin. It is normal to see slight bleeding from areas that are open and to see the cleaning solution foam when it touches the skin.



- 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 dirty, use a clean cotton swab and wash the pin from the base upward.
- 8 Use this same procedure with each of the pins.

### Saline solution only:

- 1 Gather all the materials you need:
  - Normal saline solution.
  - Cotton swabs (one for each pin)
  - One small container to put the solution in
- 2 Wash your hands.
- 3 Look at the spots where the pins pass through the skin; they 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. Pay attention to 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 Clean the area around one pin at a time. Using a cotton swab with saline solution, begin where the pin enters the skin and move out away from the pin. Remove any dried blood or scales around the edge of the skin. Don't push the cotton swabs into the hole created by the pin. It is normal to see slight bleeding from areas that are open.
- 7 If the pin itself is dirty, use a clean cotton swab and wash the pin from the base upward.

### Are there any problems from pins or pin care?

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

Your child may have pain when you do pin care, especially in the beginning. Their healthcare provider may prescribe a pain medicine. If not, what medicine you can use. Give your child pain medicine 30–60 minutes before beginning pin care so they're more comfortable while you clean the areas.

Children are often anxious during pin care. Help your child relax by showing them what you are doing, talking calmly, and allowing them to help as much as possible.

### Should my child avoid any activities while they have pins?

Ask your child's healthcare provider whether your child can swim or bathe with pins.

### When should I call my child's healthcare provider?

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.

### Notes

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