Pin-Site Care: Patient Education

Why Pin Site Care Matters?

Your surgical pins help stabilize your bone while it heals. Because the pins pass through the skin, they need regular care to prevent irritation or infection. Good pin site care keeps the skin healthy and supports healing.

How Often Should I Clean the Pin Sites?

- Clean **once a day**, unless your surgeon gives different instructions.
- After the first **7–10 days**, you may be told to clean less often if the sites are dry and healing well.

Normal recovery time can take 6-12 weeks, and frequently longer.

What Should I Use to Clean the Pin Sites?

Use the solution recommended by your care team. Common options include:

- **Chlorhexidine solution** (often preferred)
- **Normal saline**

Avoid:

- Alcohol
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Ointments or creams (unless prescribed)

How Do I Clean the Pin Sites?

1. Wash your hands thoroughly.
2. Use a **clean cotton swab or gauze** for each pin.
3. Dip the swab in the cleaning solution.
4. Gently clean **from the pin outward**, away from the skin.
5. Remove any crusts gently.
6. Allow the area to air-dry.
7. DO NOT twist/rotate or otherwise manipulate your pins during cleaning

Do I Need a Dressing?

- A light dressing may be used for the first **48–72 hours**.
- After drainage stops, many patients **do not need a dressing** unless the area rubs on clothing or becomes irritated.
- If you use a dressing, keep it clean and dry.

Showering

- Showering is usually allowed once your surgeon approves it—often after the first week.
- Let warm water run over the pin sites.
- Pat dry with a clean towel.
- Do **not** soak in a bath, pool, or hot tub unless cleared.

Watch for Signs of Infection

Call your care team if you notice:

- Increasing redness
- New or worsening pain
- Swelling around the pin
- Yellow or foul-smelling drainage
- Fever or chills
- A pin that feels loose or moves

If you have any problems or questions, please call your doctor's office (8am-5pm).

Answering service for after hours.

Protecting Your Pins

- Avoid bumping or catching the pins.
- Wear loose clothing or padding if recommended.
- Do not apply lotions or powders near the pin sites.

Key Reminders

- Clean the sites regularly as instructed.
- Keep the area dry and protected.
- Report any concerns early.