

External Fixator Pin Care Protocol



- An external fixator is fixed to the bone using pins or wires.
- These pins / wires pass through the skin into the bone.
- For this reason, infection of the pinsites is a real danger.
- Pin tract infection is a serious concern, and if not managed correctly, can lead to destabilization of the frame and treatment failure.
- For this reason proper pin site care is extremely important and should be continued for the full duration of the external fixator treatment.
- Pin site care commences in theatre when the frame is applied.
- The dressings are then changed on days 1,2 and 3 post-operatively.
- After day 3, the dressings are changed once every 5 days.
- Should a pin become more painful, red and have a drainage, the pin should be cleaned twice a day.
- If these symptoms don't improve within 3 days, the doctor's office must be contacted and a course of antibiotics will probably be prescribed.
- The dressings are performed as follows:
 - Hands are washed thoroughly and a clean working area prepared
 - The previous dressings are removed
 - Each pin site is cleaned carefully with its own piece of gauze / earbud soaked in antiseptic solution. Scabs and excess dry skin must be removed completely
 - The pin site is dressed using gauze or sponges soaked in Hibitane in alcohol solution

- This dressing is then kept against the skin using the plastic or rubber dressing clips
- This method stabilizes the dressing against the skin
- The frame can be washed in the shower on the dressing days with the pins exposed. The dressings are then done once the leg is dry
- Normal bathing is not allowed unless the frame is kept out of the water
- Swimming in a chlorinated pool is allowed once surgical wounds are healed. No public swimming pools and no fresh water.

For any queries regarding pin care or problems with frames, please contact the office at 0126442641