
Hand and Upper Extremity Clinic

Post Surgery K-Wire Care Information

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K-wire Care Information

Post-operative care for upper extremity K-wire pins includes keeping the pin sites clean and dry, protecting them from injury, and following your surgeon's specific instructions for showering, dressing, and activity. Clean the pin sites as directed, typically with soap and water or an antiseptic solution, and keep the area dry to prevent infection. Watch for signs of infection like increased pain, redness, swelling, or pus, and contact your doctor if they appear.
Pin site care

- **Initial care:** You may be instructed to keep the pin site covered with a dry sterile bandage or gauze for the first few days to a week, or until a specified time after surgery.
- **Cleaning:** Once the initial dressing is removed, clean the pin sites gently with soap and water or an antiseptic solution as directed by your surgeon.
- **Drying:** After cleaning, gently dry the area. Leaving the pin site open to air is often recommended after the initial healing period.

- **Dressing:** Follow your surgeon's advice on whether to use a dressing after the initial period. Some protocols recommend no dressing once the site is clean and dry, while others may suggest a light, dry dressing.
- **Avoid certain products:** Do not apply ointments, lotions, or creams directly to the pin sites, as this can trap bacteria and increase infection risk.

Protection and activity

- **Elevation:** Elevate the limb whenever possible to reduce swelling around the pins.
- **Protection:** Be careful when moving and dress to avoid clothing that pulls or snags on the pins.
- **Showering/Bathing:** Ask your surgeon when it is safe to shower or bathe. Thoroughly dry the pin sites and any external fixator after getting wet.

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- **Activity and exercise:** Follow your doctor's instructions for activity and physical therapy. Early motion is often encouraged, but do not use the pin area or put weight on it until your doctor says it's okay.

Contact your doctor or nurse immediately if you notice any of the following signs of infection:

- Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness around the pin site
- Red streaks leading from the pin site
- Pus or other bad-smelling drainage from the pin site
- A fever over $38^{\circ}C/101^{\circ}F$
- The pin has moved, loosened, or is causing excessive irritation