

tips on dealing with an external distraction device

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Distraction Osteogenesis is used to correct:

1. Underdeveloped jaws
2. Defects where one side of the face does not develop well (Hemifacial Microsomia)
3. Other facial anomalies

It is done surgically to slowly control the expansion of soft tissue and bone. A surgical procedure is performed to place the external distraction device across an area of the bone that has been cut. After a period of time, the pins are turned as per physicians orders until the desired length of bone is reached. After the turning process is over, the distractors will be left in place for approximately 6-8 weeks so that the bone can heal. After the new bone has formed, the device will be removed.

What to expect after surgery

Healing time differs depending on device used. Your child will initially be in the intensive care unit to make sure he or she can breathe well. If your child goes home with the distractors in place, he or she can resume activity as per the surgeon.

Your child may experience throbbing, aching, swelling, bruising, and numbness around the pin sites. Most symptoms will improve after about 10 days. Some swelling will remain until the distraction phase is over.

How to care for the Distractors

1. Clean the pin site twice a day using a Q-Tip with hydrogen peroxide diluted to half-strength with water (1:1).
2. With a new Q-Tip apply bacitracin around the pin site after cleaning. Your child's physician will provide you with a prescription for bacitracin.

Call your child's physician if you have any questions or:

1. There is drainage, increased pain, swelling, or redness around the pin sites.
2. Your child has a temperature greater than 101.5° Fahrenheit
3. The pain is not relieved by medications such as Tylenol®, Motrin®, or pain medicine prescribed by your child's physician
4. Your child has difficulty chewing or biting

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empowering and giving hope to individuals and families affected by facial differences