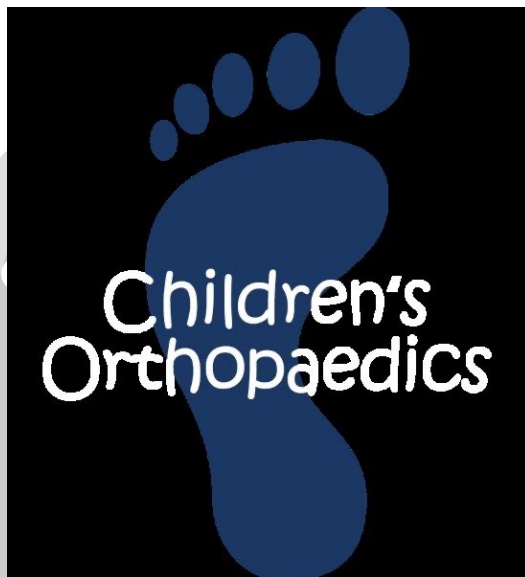


Information about

# K-wires



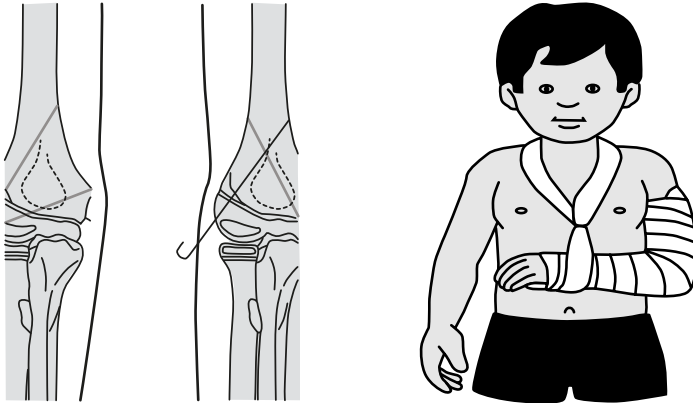
Royal Hospital for Children  
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## What are K-wires?

K-wires (also known as Kirschner wires or “pins”) are stiff, straight wires used to help repair broken bones. Depending on your child’s type of fracture (broken bone) they may need several wires. These are temporary and we remove them at a later date.

We insert the wires during surgery under general anaesthetic which means your child will be asleep. There will be a small part of the wire sticking out of the skin. This is to allow for easy removal in an outpatient clinic appointment. We then cover the wires with a padded dressing and plaster cast so you won’t be able to see them.

During the surgery your child will receive antibiotics to reduce the risk of infection. They will also receive pain killers to help with the pain after their surgery. Ward staff will provide pain relief during their stay to keep your child as comfortable as possible.



## K-wire care at home

Your child will not be able to see or feel the wires while in cast. It is important that you or your child do not try to touch or look at the wires while in cast, as this can introduce infection to the area and may affect bone healing.

Keep the cast dry and clean, please follow the plaster care advice given, and give your child pain killers (e.g. paracetamol) as needed.

## Follow up

Your child will receive a Pin Clinic appointment on: \_\_\_\_\_

## Removal of K-wires

We remove K-wires in the Pin clinic in the outpatient plaster room 3-4 weeks after surgery.

This is a quick and safe way of removing the wires. Sometimes it can be uncomfortable whilst we are removing the wires but this is over very quickly.

You will be able to stay with your child throughout the procedure, and it is important to remain calm so you can comfort and reassure them.

### Before and during removal:

- Your child will have an x-ray before or after the wire removal.
- We advise you to give Paracetamol (calpol) about 30 minutes before your child's appointment time to minimise discomfort.
- We will remove the cast with a plaster saw which cuts through the hard outer layer, but not the padding underneath. This is not painful for your child, however the loud noise (it sounds like a Hoover) and vibrating sensation can be strange for them.
- Once we remove the cast, we then remove the dressing around the wires. Staff will place a drape over the wires so you and your child do not need to look at them. We clean the wires and rotate them to help us remove them. Using special forceps the staff will remove each wire one at a time. Your child may be feeling tugging and slight discomfort, this is only for a few seconds.
- After staff remove the wires, there will be small wounds (pin sites) where the wires were. It is common for these sites to bleed a little after removal, so staff will apply pressure and then a small dressing.
- We will then review your child in the fracture clinic to decide if they need further treatment.

## After removal:

- Keep the pin sites dry and covered for 48-72 hours after removal of wires
- Do not submerge or soak the pin site area until healed for 5 days. This includes baths and swimming.
- After 1 week you can wash the area gently, dry carefully, and apply non-perfumed moisturiser

## Things to look out for

Skin irritation around wire site can occur after removing the wires, but applying simple non-perfumed moisturisers can help.

Complications after k-wire insertion, like infection, are uncommon but it is important if you notice any of the following signs you get medical advice. Please contact your GP or the hospital.

- High temperature
- Foul smell, oozing or discharge from cast or dressing after first 24 hours
- Increasing pain around wound site (that painkillers do not help)
- Wound site is red, swollen or hot to touch

## Concerns or queries

If you have any concerns about your child's condition please contact

**Acute orthopaedic trauma liaison team:**

☎ 0141 451 8497 or 0141 451 5644

✉ [ggc.rhcorthotrauma@ggc.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:ggc.rhcorthotrauma@ggc.scot.nhs.uk)

Or for plaster issues contact plaster room directly on

☎ 0141 452 4129



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