

Removal of metalwork (children)

Orthopaedics

The purpose of this leaflet is to explain the removal of metalwork and aftercare.

Removal of metalwork

Removal of metalwork involves taking out screws, plates, nails or pins from healed bone that were inserted during a previous operation. Removal of metalwork is a simple operation which can take place as a day case. Usually the same cut from the initial operation is used to prevent further scarring.

Reasons for removing metalwork

Metalwork may be removed if it starts to present problems such as pain or reduced movement.

What to expect in hospital

You and your child will be greeted by your nurse and shown to your bed area. You will be seen by an anaesthetist (the doctor who puts your child to sleep) and your surgeon prior to the operation. They will check your child is well and confirm that the metalwork needs to be removed. This may require a further X-ray which will be checked by the surgeon before the operation takes place.

After the operation

Following the operation your child's pain will be monitored and controlled with medication. Gentle movement of the affected limb will be encouraged and the wound site observed for any bleeding. Your child will be offered a drink on returning to the ward area and may eat shortly after if they feel well enough.

Care at home

Wound care

Your child's wound site will be covered with a dressing. Depending on the dressing used, the nurses/surgeons will advise you when to remove it.

Your child's wound site should be observed for signs of infection, such as excessive swelling, redness, discharge and pain.

If your child develops a temperature with any of these signs they should be checked by your GP.

Pain relief

Regular pain relief is advised. Paracetamol should be given every 4-6 hours for the next few days and ibuprofen every 6-8 hours. Read your bottle for the correct dose for your child according to their age.

Eating and drinking

Your child may eat and drink normally.

Nausea and vomiting

Do not worry if your child feels sick or vomits once or twice after leaving the hospital. The anaesthetic can cause this, and it is not an uncommon side effect. If this occurs stop giving food for about an hour and try small amounts of water or diluted juice every 20 minutes, then try a light diet such as plain biscuits or toast. If your child continues to vomit, please call for advice or attend your GP or nearest Emergency Department.

Activity

Due to the general anaesthetic your child must rest for the next 24 hours with adult supervision. Your surgeon will advise you as to when your child may participate in sport and PE.

Follow-up

Any follow-up appointment to see your surgeon will be arranged by the hospital. If your child needs a wound check by your GP, we ask that you make that appointment yourselves.

Useful contact details

East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust:

- Website www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk
- Telephone 01438 314333

Bluebell Ward, Lister Hospital:

- Telephone 01438 284008

Children's Day Surgery, Level 4, Lister Hospital:

- Telephone 01438 285775

Children's Emergency Department, Lister Hospital:

- Telephone 01438 284333

Urgent Care Centre, New QEII Hospital, Welwyn Garden City:

- Telephone 01707 247549

Virtual Fracture Clinic:

- Telephone 07788 178689

Leaflet information

You can request this information in a different format or another language; please speak to your doctor or nurse.

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