

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Removal of Kirchner wires (K-wires)

This leaflet has been produced to give general information and advice to patients (or their parents/carers) who are having K-wires removed. Most of your questions should be answered by this leaflet but it is not intended to replace the discussion between you and your doctor. If you have any concerns or require further explanation after reading this leaflet, please discuss this with a member of the healthcare team caring for you.

What are K-wires?

K-wires are surgical wires that are used to hold bones in a corrected position following surgery.

The wires stick out of the skin so that they can be easily removed once the bone has healed. They are covered with a dressing and a plaster cast and you/the patient will not be able to see them. Alternatively they may be exposed out of the skin. The K-wires can usually be removed in the plaster room in the outpatient department.

How to prepare for K-wire removal

Prior to your clinic appointment we recommend you/the patient take some simple pain relief (e.g. paracetamol/ Calpol)

The plaster cast will be removed in the plaster room. This does not hurt, but a noisy machine may be used and you/the patient may feel vibration from the plaster saw. Alternatively, if the cast is a backslab or dressing, scissors will be used.

Removal of the K-wires

The dressings around the K-wires will be removed, and the skin around them cleaned, before the K-wires are removed using special pliers.

This procedure is usually quick and may feel strange but is not usually too uncomfortable.

The small wounds may bleed a little and dressings will be applied. You/the patient will be advised how long these dressings should stay on. The injured bone should be healing and the discomfort from the K-wires should settle within a few hours.

We recommend you/the patient continue with simple pain relief as required.

Possible problems

Sometimes it is not possible to remove K-wires in the outpatient department.

If this is the case, a date will be arranged for you/the patient to come into hospital as a Day Case patient for the wires to be removed.

Aftercare

A further plaster cast may be applied for a few more weeks and an outpatient appointment made for this to be removed.

At this appointment some patients will be advised that they need physiotherapy. Children should not play contact sports for between four and six weeks after removal of the cast.

Contact details

If you need further advice, please telephone 01623 622515 and ask to be put through to the plaster room. The department is open from Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

If you need advice outside of these hours, you will need to contact your nearest Emergency Department.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/k-wireremoval
Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222
Newark Hospital: 01636 685692
Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet (if relevant) please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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