

Bolster dressings are used to prevent excessive soft tissue movement around skeletal screws/pins/wires. They are generally used on femoral screw sites, or on half-pin sites on Ilizarov/Taylor spatial frames. Reducing soft tissue movement with the application of a bolster dressing can lessen patient discomfort and prevent pin site infection.

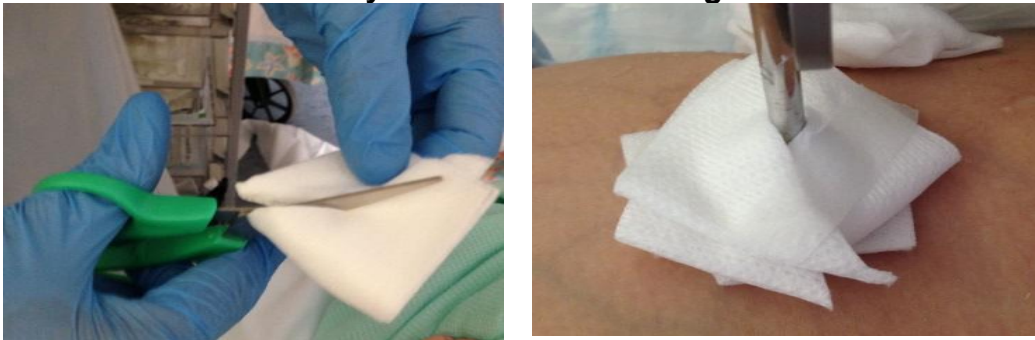
There is little evidence available to support the use of any one particular type of bolster dressing. Each child/young person and fixator is different, therefore the types of bolster dressings used can vary.

Points to remember:

- A 'bolster dressing' is a pack of firm dressing material between the child's skin and fixator.
- The bolster dressing should be removed before daily pin site cleaning or swimming, and reapplied after daily pin site cleaning.
- No one method or type of bolster dressing is absolute.
- The main principle of bolster dressings is **to prevent the constant movement of soft tissues around a skeletal screw, pin or wire.**

### Examples of Bolster Dressings

#### Key hole Bolster Dressing



(a)

(b)

On a small square of gauze, make a diagonal cut from one corner to the centre. (a).

Apply the gauze square around the pin/wire and secure by applying tape to gauze, not skin (b).

#### Ribbon Gauze Bolster Dressing



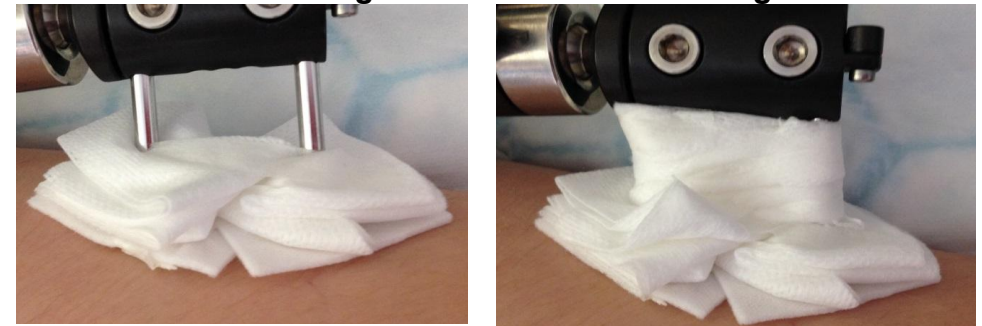
(c)

(d)

Apply a small key hole gauze pad to the pin site (c).

Unfold a large gauze swab and roll into a 'sausage shape'. Wrap the gauze 'sausage' around the pin site, applying pressure to ensure a firm dressing (d). Secure with tape (on the gauze not the skin).;

#### Gauze Figure of '8' Bolster Dressing



(e)

(f)

Apply a small key hole gauze dressing around each pin/screw (e), and secure with tape as (b).

Unfold a large gauze swab and roll into a 'sausage shape'. Wrap the gauze 'sausage' around two pins/screws using a figure of '8', applying pressure to ensure a firm dressing (f). You may need to use more than one gauze 'sausage'. Secure with tape (on the gauze not the skin).

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### Help and Advice

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## Bolster Dressings

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