

# Distractor Care For Craniomaxillofacial Surgery

Distraction is used for patients with jaw disorders or patients who require a large frontal / mid face advancement. By using external distraction devices the bones are very gradually moved creating spaces to allow new bone to form. The position of the distractors depends on your child's surgery / condition.



## Management of distractors in hospital

The Australian Craniofacial Unit (ACFU) team will use a special key to turn the distractors. This will occur 1-2 times a day but this will be decided by your surgeon as each case can be different.

Turning of the distractors can be uncomfortable for your child and analgesia may be required prior to the turns occurring. Your nurse will be able to assist with providing some pain relief.

Once the bones are in the correct position the distractors need to stay in place to help stabilise the new bone as it heals. This usually takes approximately 2 months after the turning of the distractors have ceased. During this time your child may be allowed to go home or discharge to local accommodation. You will be shown how to care for the distractors by your nurse before discharge.

## Distractor Management

Keeping the Distractor sites clean is very important to reduce the risk of infection. It needs to be performed twice a day ideally in the morning and at night. If pain relief is required, please give your child pain relief approximately 30 minutes before beginning the distractor care.

Firstly, check each distractor site for signs that it could be infected.

Signs of infection include:

- > increased pain
- > swelling
- > pus
- > increased amounts of redness around the distractor

**If you become concerned or suspect an infection contact the Craniofacial Unit or present to the Women's and Children's Hospital for review.**

## Distractor care

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water
2. Wet the tips of the wooden applicators with the sodium chloride 0.9%
3. Use the wooden applicators to clean and trace around the distractor where it enters the skin, removing any crusty bits or dry blood
4. Using a new wooden applicator apply a small amount of the betadine ointment to the distractor sites
5. Repeat on both distractors



## Discharge

Your Nurse will organise equipment to look after your child's distractors at home. You will be given one month's supply. For more equipment please contact:

### Home Equipment Centre

- > Phone: 8161 6233
- > 1st Floor, Rogerson Building in Paediatric Outpatients Area

The craniofacial doctor will discuss a plan for returning to the hospital for the distractor turns each day.

### **If you are concerned about any of the following:**

- > Fever
- > Vomiting
- > Discharge / ooze from the wound / distractor sites
- > More sleepy or flat than usual
- > Any fluid leaking from the nose

**In Hours please phone the Craniofacial Department on 81617235**

**Out of Hours attend Women's and Children's Emergency Department**

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## For more information

**Women's and Children's Hospital  
Australian Craniofacial Unit  
72 King William Road  
North Adelaide SA 5006  
Telephone: 8161 7235**



Government  
of South Australia

SA Health



Women's  
& Children's  
Hospital