

# TISSUE EXPANSION


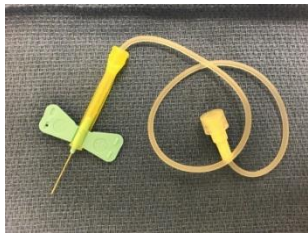



## Explanation of Procedure:

Tissue expansion is a process that stretches normal skin to be used in other areas of the body. For example, the new skin can be used to replace removed birth marks and burn scars.

In the operating room, the expander “balloon” is placed under normal skin near the area of injured or abnormal skin. After a period of healing, the expander is slowly filled with normal saline (saltwater) causing the skin to stretch. Once the skin has finished stretching, you/your child will have a second surgery where the expander is removed. The “new” skin is used to replace the injured/damaged skin.

## Home Tissue Expansion Supplies:

When the surgeon decides it is time to begin filling the expander, you will be taught how to fill the expanders at home. Supplies can be purchased at the CHLA Specialty Pharmacy. You will need to purchase the following supplies:

				
Pre-filled 10cc syringes with normal saline (saltwater)	23-gauge butterfly needles to access port	Box of alcohol pads	Gauze	Sharps container for disposal of used needles

## Directions for Filling the Tissue Expanders at Home:

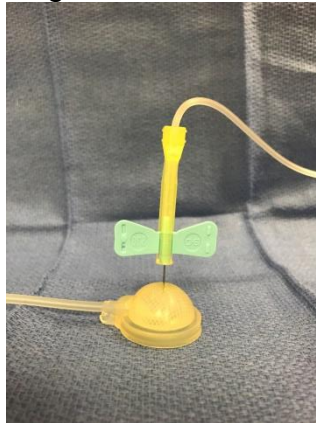
1. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry with a clean paper towel.
2. Clean the port with an alcohol pad for 20 seconds. Let it dry for 10 seconds.



3. Attach the prefilled normal saline syringe to the butterfly needle by screwing it on.



4. Insert the butterfly needle into the port, being careful not to touch the clean port with your hands.



5. Slowly fill the balloon with the amount of normal saline as instructed by your surgeon.
6. Repeat with each port as needed.
7. Remove the needle from the port.
8. Unscrew the syringe from the needle and throw the needle away in the Sharps container.
9. Secure ports as instructed.
10. If there are signs of infection (redness, pain, pus drainage), do not fill the balloon and contact the plastic surgery clinic immediately.

**\*\*Note:** The amount of normal saline inserted may change during the expansion process. Please keep a log to keep track of how much you are expanding every day. Bring this log to each appointment.

### Plastic Surgery Clinic

4650 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90027 | CHLA.org

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## General Post-Operative Instructions:

### Care of the Surgical Site:

- Keep the dressings in place until your first follow-up visit unless you are given different instructions by your surgeon/surgical team.
- It is normal to have drainage from the port site (the area where the tube exits the skin) immediately after surgery. The drainage may initially be red, pink, or yellow.
- Once you have been cleared to wash the area, wash with mild soap and water. The soap should be perfume and dye free. If the surgery is on the scalp or near the eyes, the soap should be mild and non-irritating (i.e., Johnson's baby shampoo).
- Clean the port site (the area where the tube exits the skin) with soap and water every day and as needed.
- The ports and the port tubes will be wrapped up when not in use. You will be taught how to do this at your first follow-up appointment.

### Activity/School:

- Most normal activity may be resumed 2-4 days after surgery.
- Your child may return to school, but they should **NOT** participate in any contact sports or PE while expanders are in place.
- If you or your child do not wish to return to school during the expansion process, please talk to your school and doctor about arranging for home schooling during this time. It is best to do this and get the proper paperwork as soon as you have a surgery date so your child doesn't miss any school.
- No swimming while the expanders are in place.

### Call the Doctor/Plastic Surgery Clinic:

- If there are any signs and symptoms of infection of the skin over the expander or the port site (redness, swelling, pain, increased warmth, pus, or smelly drainage)
- If there are any changes to the skin that is being expanded: redness, discoloration, stretch marks.
- If the expander cannot be filled with the amount of normal saline you were told to use.
- If you can see the expander balloon under the skin.
- If the port begins to leak.
- If your child sustains any trauma on or near the expander.

### Plastic Surgery Clinic Contact Information:

- **Monday-Friday, 8am-4:30pm:** Call the Plastic surgery nursing line at **323-361-4540** with any questions or concerns. The nurse may not answer the phone immediately, but they check messages regularly throughout the day, so leave a message.
- **Monday-Friday 8am-4:30 pm:** Call the Plastic Surgery scheduling line at **323-361-2154** for appointments.
- **After 4:30pm during the week or weekends:** Call **323-660-2450** and ask for the Plastic Surgery doctor on call.

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