

Tissue Expansion at Home – Instructions for Families

Your child is undergoing tissue expansion. The purpose of tissue expansion is to grow new skin over a period of several weeks to months.

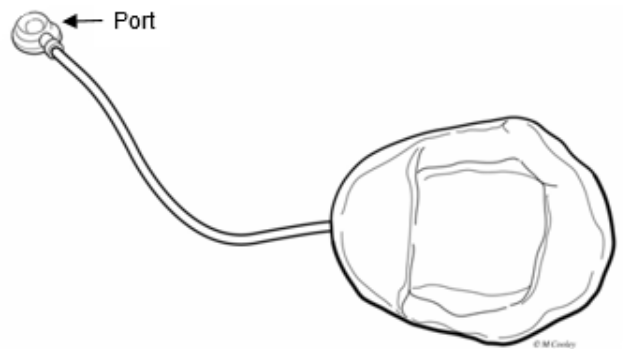
A tissue expander is a silicone balloon that is placed under the skin. It is connected to a tube and a port. The port is located outside the body. The tube connects the tissue expander (balloon) which is under the skin, to the port. The port allows you to fill the balloon with normal saline (Picture 1).

During the surgery to place the balloon under the skin, some normal saline may be injected into the balloon. A blue dye may also be placed inside the balloon. This allows us to see whether a leak is present.

How to fill the balloon at home

An order for supplies will be sent to Nationwide Children's Homecare and will be delivered to your home address.

- Do not start filling the balloon until you get instructions from your child's surgeon.
- The fills at home are done two times each day (morning and evening).
- Your surgeon will tell you how much normal saline to inject at each fill.



Picture 1 The port, tube, and tissue expander (balloon)

1. Wash your hands with soap and water, and put on a new pair of gloves.
2. Remove the dressing.
3. Clean the port with an alcohol pad.
4. Attach the needle to the syringe. Carefully remove the plastic cover from the needle. Using the needle, pierce the rubbery, curved part of the port until the tip of the needle touches the metal in the back of the port. Then inject the amount of normal saline you were instructed to use. The syringe may have more normal saline in it than needed. If that is the case, only use the amount you were told to inject.

IMPORTANT: Use a new needle and syringe for every expansion.

5. After you have finished each expansion, activate the safety on the needle by pushing the butterfly piece forward. Discard the needle and syringe in a sharps container.
6. After the injection, secure the port as instructed by your child's surgeon.

When to call the doctor

Call the plastic surgery office at 614-722-6299 or call your child's surgeon if you notice any of the following:

- redness and swelling around the incision
- drainage or odor from the incision
- you can see the tissue expander
- blue fluid leaking from the incision, the tube or the port.