

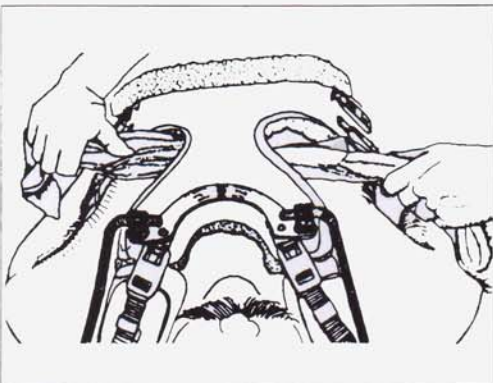


# Ballert

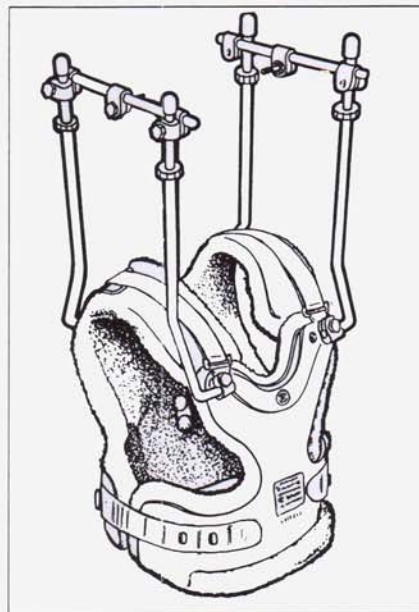
## ORTHOPEDIC OF CHICAGO



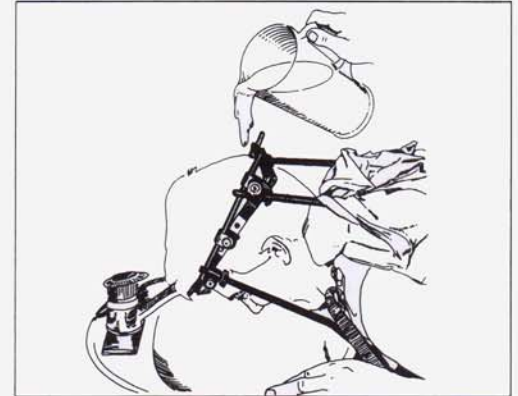
*Fig. 1A - Cleaning and Drying*



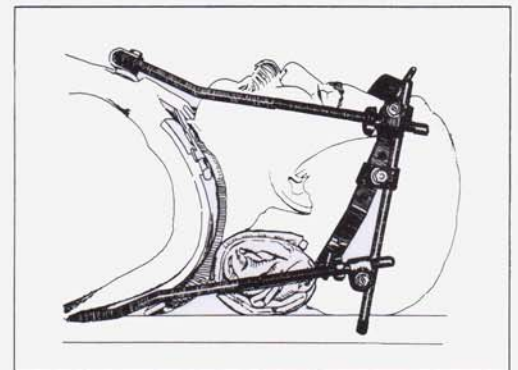
*Fig. 1B - Cleaning and Drying*



*Halo Vest*



*Fig. 2 - Shampooing*



*Fig. 3 - Sleeping with a Rolled Towel*

## HOW TO WEAR AND CARE FOR YOUR HALO VEST

### PURPOSE

You have a dislocation or fracture of one or more bones in your neck (vertebrae). You are fitted with a Halo ring and vest to hold your neck in place while it is healing. The healing process usually takes 8 to 12 weeks, but you will probably be discharged home after a few days. If you required surgery, you may stay in the hospital longer. While you are at home you and/or members of your family will be responsible for taking care of your Halo vest.

This pamphlet will assist you by outlining some of the Dos and Don'ts of living with a Halo vest.

## CARE OF THE VEST

- 1 Before you go home be sure your vest fits you comfortably. **Do not attempt to loosen or adjust your vest by yourself.** Any adjustments must be made by medical staff.
- 2 Keep your vest dry at all times. If you should get the liner wet, dry it by using a regular hair dryer on a “cool” setting.
- 3 At least once a day, and with the assistance of a family member, areas around your pins should be cleansed with soap and water. Any crusting or scabbing should be removed with hydrogen peroxide solution or alcohol and a Q-tip. If peroxide or alcohol burns, remove it with soapy water.
- 4 **Do not use any ointments or antiseptics on your pin site.**
- 5 If you observe an inflamed pin site or shifting of the pin, experience pain or observe an open area at the pin sites, call your physician’s office.

## DAILY CARE AND HYGIENE WHILE WEARING YOUR HALO VEST

- 1 It is important to keep your skin and liner as clean as possible.
- 2 To wash your body under the vest use a bath towel that has been wrung out in hot water. Pull it back and forth beneath both front and back portions of the vest (see *Figs. 1A* and *1B*).
- 3 A towel moistened with alcohol may be used in the same way every 2 to 3 days to clean and dry the skin under the vest.
- 4 **No soap, lotion or powder should be used under the vest!**
- 5 If you discover any reddened areas, call your doctor’s office.
- 6 Showering should not be attempted. Either take a sponge bath or run 2-3 inches of water in a tub and sit in it to wash. Protect the bottom of your vest with plastic.
- 7 When washing your arms, bend over to prevent water from running into the vest.
- 8 When shampooing, protect the shoulder of the vest with plastic. You can kneel beside the bathtub and bend forward with your head over the tub while an assistant shampoos and rinses your hair (see *Fig. 2*).
- 9 **While the pins are in place, you should not use any tints, dyes, sprays or conditioners on your hair.**

## TIPS FOR SLEEPING MORE COMFORTABLY

- 1 Putting a rolled towel or pillowcase between your head and the back of your neck (when on your back) or next to your cheek (when on your side) will help you feel more normal. It’s important that the towel or pillowcase does not apply pressure (see *Fig. 3*).
- 2 Sleeping with the head of your bed or mattress slightly elevated may also help you become more comfortable.
- 3 If you prefer to sleep on your stomach, put a pillow or blanket at your chest and another at the front of your Halo ring so your nose is not pressed into the mattress.
- 4 When getting out of bed, roll up onto your side at the edge of the bed, drop your legs off the edge and push sideways with your elbow and hand at the same time.

## TIPS FOR CLOTHING

Adapting clothes to fit under and around your vest and especially the bars can be a challenge.

- 1 In the summer, cotton T-shirts can be worn beneath the vest. The shoulder straps or seams of the T-shirts can be split from the neck to the armholes. The top is then pulled up from the bottom of the vest and then refastened using pins or buttons.
- 2 Women can wear bras by slipping a larger size under the front of the vest between the breasts and fastening the straps on the outside of the vest in the back. An elasticized halter top also works well for this purpose.
- 3 If you prefer to wear clothing over the vest, consider using regular cotton shirts or blouses, one or two sizes larger and adapting them. They can also be worn by buttoning them as high as possible and tying the tails in a knot, for summer, or tucking in the flannel shirt for winter.
- 4 Jogging suits with a front-zipped jacket are very popular and easy to adapt.
- 5 A winter coat one or two sizes larger than normal or a cape works well. A scarf pulled up high over your ears and wrapped around your head is quite adequate.
- 6 Shoes or boots should be low-heeled with traction soles to avoid slipping.

## STAY ACTIVE!

Despite initial feelings of awkwardness, it is very important — both physically and emotionally — for you to carry on as much as possible with your daily activities and not “go into hiding.”

- 1 Be prepared for comments, but you will find most people quite courteous and kind.
- 2 You can go out to dinner, movies, a walk, parties, etc., but avoid activities involving heavy lifting, jumping or running.
- 3 If your job does not require a lot of physical activity such as lifting, you should be able to return to work, at least part time, or to school (check with your physician first!).
- 4 Do not attempt to drive yourself because wearing the Halo restricts head movement. To get into cars, back into the seat with your body bent forward, then swing your legs around.
- 5 You will tire more quickly, especially at first, but you will develop endurance as time goes by. **If you develop persistent neck pain or experience any change in the feeling or movement in your arms or legs, notify your doctor immediately**
- 6 A regular diet of normal size portions with lots of protein and milk or milk products is all that is required to help with the healing process.
- 7 You may engage in sexual activity during the time you have the Halo vest, but you may have to try different positions in order to have sex with some degree of comfort.

## **WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR**

Please notify your doctor immediately if you experience the onset or worsening of the following symptoms:

- \* Inflamed pin site
- \* Shifting pin
- \* “Clicking” sensation at the pins
- \* Persistent neck pain
- \* Change in the feeling or movement in your arms or legs

## **HALO REMOVAL**

Two or three months after the Halo vest is applied, the Halo ring, skull pins and vest are removed by the physician once x-rays have confirmed that your neck is healed. To reduce scarring, a peroxide saturated gauze may be used to massage the pin sites. After you go home you should continue to move the skin over the pin holes for a period of several days to avoid reattachment of the adhesion.

When the Halo is removed your head will feel very heavy and your neck wobbly. You will be fitted with a collar to support your neck which will be worn for the next several weeks. After the collar comes off, your doctor may recommend that you attend physical therapy sessions to strengthen your neck muscles. It will be several weeks before you are feeling normal again.

**IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING ANY OTHER PROBLEMS OR DISCOMFORT FROM YOUR USE OF YOUR HALO VEST PLEASE CONTACT YOUR BALLERT PRACTITIONER \_\_\_\_\_ AT (773)878-2445.**

## **ABOUT BALLERT**

Ballert is an ABC certified facility. ABC certification means that Ballert meets all of the professional and quality standards set by the American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics, Inc. These standards provide you with the finest orthotic and prosthetic devices. Whether your doctor prescribed an off-the-shelf or custom designed and manufactured device you are assured that Ballert will stand behind its products and will work with you and your doctor to assure the proper balance between function and comfort.



WE ACCEPT MEDICARE, PUBLIC AID,  
WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION, HMO'S AND PPO'S.

