

Craniosynostosis Repair

Care after your child's surgery

How do I take care of the incision?

Most of the time, we close your child's scalp incision with stitches that dissolve on their own. They will dissolve in about 1 month after the surgery.

Sometimes, the surgeon will use stitches that do not dissolve. These are blue or black in color and must be taken out 10 to 14 days after the surgery. If your child has stitches that need to be removed, make an appointment with the Craniofacial Center at 206-987-2544.

For all children:

- Gently wash your child's scalp daily with shampoo. Pat the incision dry with a clean towel.
- Apply the antibiotic ointment we gave you to the incision 2 times each day for 5 days.

How do I protect my child's head?

- Protect your child's head from hard bumps, sharp objects and sunburn, like normal.
- Watch your child closely during play with other children for the first 3 weeks.
- Your child may lie in any position. Change your baby's position every 3 to 4 hours.
- You may choose to sit your baby in a car seat to help reduce swelling of the face and head. This can be done 3 to 4 times a day for an hour or more if your baby is comfortable.

When can my child return to day care and other normal activities?

Your child can return to day care and other normal activities when he is eating and sleeping fairly well, the incision is healing well, he has no fever and you feel he is ready.

Will my child need pain medicine at home?

- Your child may have some mild pain at home. Give Tylenol as needed.
- If your child is over 6 months old, you can also give ibuprofen.
- If you do not know how much medicine to give your child, please check with your nurse or pharmacist.

To Learn More

- Craniofacial Center Appointments
206-987-2208
- Craniofacial Center Nurses 206-987-2208, option 4
- Hospital operator
206-987-2000 or
866-987-2000
- Your child's healthcare provider
- www.seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line
1-866-583-1527.
Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.
- For Deaf and hard of hearing callers
206-987-2280 (TTY)

- Most children will also get a prescription medicine to use if the Tylenol or ibuprofen is not enough. Use this as needed and then go back to Tylenol or ibuprofen as soon as the pain decreases.

When do I come back for a follow-up appointment?

You will come back to the Craniofacial Clinic 2 to 6 weeks after the surgery, or sooner if needed. If possible, make this appointment before you leave the hospital, or you can call 206-987-2208.

After that, appointments will be less often. An important visit will take place 2 years after the surgery. At this time, your child will have a follow-up CT scan of the head to check for complete healing of the skull bones.

When should I call the doctor or nurse?

Call if your child has any of these signs:

- Pain that does not go away or gets worse
- Edges of the incision split apart, or fluid leaks out
- Redness around the incision that gets worse or is bright red and warm to the touch
- Swelling around the incision that gets worse
- Swelling around the eye that happens quickly (after the initial swelling goes away)
- Fever of 102°F or higher

Who do I call when I have a question?

For the first 2 weeks after surgery, call the hospital operator at 206-987-2000 and ask for the neurosurgery provider on call.

After 2 weeks, call the Craniofacial nurses at 206-987-2208, option 4 during working hours. During evenings, weekends and holidays, call the hospital operator at 206-987-2000 and ask to speak to the neurosurgery or plastic surgery provider on call.