

Craniosynostosis Repair

Care After Your Child's Surgery

Craniosynostosis happens when the plates of bone that make up your child's skull close too early. This handout will explain how to care for your child after surgery to repair this.

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 about 1 month after the surgery.

If your child has stitches that need to be removed, you will need to make an appointment with the Craniofacial Center at 206-987-2208.

For all children:

- Gently wash your child's scalp daily with shampoo. Pat the incision dry with a clean towel.
 - Apply a thin coating of the antibiotic ointment we gave you to the incision 2 times each day for 5 days.
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How do I protect my child's head?

- Protect your child's head from hard bumps, sharp objects and sunburn, as usual.
 - Your child may lie in any position. Change your baby's position frequently while awake (at least every 2 hours).
 - You may choose to sit your baby in a car seat, highchair or other 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.
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When can my child return to day care and other normal activities?

It is OK to return to day care and other normal activities when:

- your child is eating and sleeping fairly well
 - your child has no fever
 - the incision is healing well
 - you feel your child is ready
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To Learn More

- Craniofacial Center Appointments
206-987-2208
- Craniofacial Center Nurses
206-987-1117
- Hospital operator
206-987-2000 or
866-987-2000
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your 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.

Will my child need pain medicine at home?

Your child may have some pain at home. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) are often used for pain. Check with your healthcare provider before giving any type of medicine to your child.

Most children will also get a prescription medicine to use if the pain is moderate or severe. Use this along with Tylenol or ibuprofen as needed until the pain decreases.

Refer to these Seattle Children's handouts:

- "Acute Pain" (seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE503.pdf)
- "Acetaminophen (Tylenol) Dosage Table" (seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1305.pdf)
- "Ibuprofen (Motrin) Dosage Table" (seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1306.pdf)
- "Pain Medicine After Surgery" (seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1251.pdf)

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. This appointment is usually scheduled at the same time the surgery is scheduled. If not, or you need to change your appointment, please 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:

- Fever of 101.5°F or higher
- Less awake or alert than normal
- Swelling of the head or face that comes back after the swelling from surgery has improved
- Redness around the incision that gets worse or is bright red and warm to the touch
- Edges of the incision split apart, or fluid leaks out
- Pain that is not helped by medicine
- Not eating or drinking well, vomiting
- Injury to the head

Who do I call when I have a question?

Call the Craniofacial nurses at 206-987-1117 during working hours. During evenings, weekends and holidays, call the hospital operator at 206-987-2000 and ask to speak to the plastic surgery provider on call.