

# Discharge Instructions: Caring for Your Child's Cranial Incision



Your child has undergone a surgical procedure that left a cut (incision) on their scalp. The incision was closed using stitches (sutures), surgical staples, skin glue, or small white adhesive strips. These items must be cared for so that your child's incision heals correctly. Follow the tips on this sheet when caring for your child's incision at home.

## Incision care

- Position your child so that they can sleep without putting pressure on the incision for 2 weeks after surgery.
- Keep your child from picking, scratching, or pulling at the incision area. Put mittens or socks on their hands if needed.
- Keep the incision clean and dry. Wash it gently with mild soap and warm water. Then gently pat the incision dry with a towel.
- Don't use oils, lotions, or creams on the incision unless you've been told to do so by your child's healthcare provider.
- Don't let your child take baths, swim in pools, or sit in hot tubs. This helps prevent infection of the incision site.
- Protect the incision from the sun for at least 6 months after the surgery. Have your child wear a hat, scarf, or sunblock with a recommended SPF (sun protection factor) of 30 or greater.

## Other home care

- Limit your child's activities to calm, quiet play. Don't let your child take part in rough play or sports until their healthcare provider says it's OK.
- Help your child with exercises for bending the neck. Have your child practice turning their head from side to side 4 times a day.
- Feed your child their regular diet as directed by the provider.
- Make sure your child avoids exertion, heat, stress, and tiredness.

## Follow-up

Make a follow-up appointment.

## When to call the healthcare provider

Call the healthcare provider right away if your child has any of the following:

- Separation of the skin at the incision site
- Drainage, redness, warmth, foul odor, or swelling at the incision site
- Abnormal drowsiness or other changes in behavior
- Weakness of arms or legs

- Headache or visual disturbance
- Seizures
- Vomiting
- Fever of 100.4° F ( 38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Shaking chills
- Symptoms that might suggest meningitis, such as severe neck pain or sensitivity to light

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