

Caring for Your Child After Brachial Plexus Surgery



What is a brachial plexus injury?

- The brachial plexus is a bunch of nerves that connect from your spinal cord to your shoulder, arm, and hand.
- Sometimes these nerves can be injured because they become stretched or torn away from the spinal cord.
- These injuries can occur during childbirth or because of sports or a car accident.
- You may need surgery to help your shoulder, arm, and hand move again.
- Your medical team will decide if you need to have surgery.

What can I expect after brachial plexus surgery?

- Your child may experience some pain and discomfort after surgery. This is normal and should only last a few days. Your team will give you directions to manage the pain.
- Your child will wear a sling to support their arm and to help keep it still. It is important that your child not move their arm. The sling will likely be worn for 3 weeks.
- To help prevent movement of the arm, you may want to put a onesie on your infant or a t-shirt on your child over the sling. This will prevent your child from wiggling out of the sling.

How do I care for my child's wound while they are in the sling?

Your child will have to wear the sling constantly every day for 3 weeks. Here's how to care for your child's wounds:

- Try to keep it dry. You can wash your child around the sling. After 3 weeks, your child will return to the Brachial Plexus clinic to have the sling removed.
- Your team will check the incisions and make sure everything is healing properly.

How do I care for my child after the sling is removed?

- Gently clean the wound(s) daily with mild soap and water and a washcloth. DO NOT use rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.
- You can start massaging the scar a week after the sling is removed. Massaging the scar will help it show less and make it less sensitive.
- Use creams or lotions, such as **Aquaphor™** that don't have any scents.
- Massage along the length of the scar and across the scar. Massage in small circles using a little pressure and rub along the length of scar. If this causes your child to be in pain, stop and try again the next day.
- Massage the scar 2 times a day for no more than 5 minutes.

What activities can my child participate in?

- Your child can start to do their usual activities after the sling has been removed.
- Check the site for increase redness, swelling and/or drainage. This could be a potential sign of infection along with fever. If this occurs, please contact our Brachial Plexus Nurse Care Manager
- Your child should start occupational therapy again if they were participating before.
If your child has not had therapy before, please contact Rehabilitation Services @ 323-361-4155

Who do I call If I have questions?

If at any point you have questions or concerns about your child's care or wounds after surgery, please contact our team at (323) 361-5834.