

# Instructions After Craniostygnostosis Surgery



## What is craniostygnostosis surgery?

Surgery to help reshape the baby's skull because the joints that hold the skull bones together closed too soon.

## What should I expect after surgery?

### Swelling and Bruising:

- Swelling around the head and eyes is normal. Swelling may be worse around 2 to 3 days after surgery.
- Bruises will fade in a week or two.

### Activity Level:

- Babies may be sleepy for a few days. Then, their energy will return to normal.

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## How to Care for Your Baby

### Keep the incision clean and dry:

- Bandages are usually removed before you leave the hospital.
- After 3 days, wash the incision with a clean, damp cloth.
- Do not let the incision go underwater until your doctor says it is okay.

### Watch for Infection:

- Signs of infection include redness, swelling, warmth, discharge, or a bad smell.
- Tell your doctor if any of these symptoms occur.

### Elevate the Head:

- Keep your baby's head slightly raised up while sleeping or resting to reduce swelling.

### Regular Feeding:

- Return to your baby's usual feeding routine as soon as they are ready.
- Offer small and frequent meals.

### Pain Management:

- Take acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil). Use them as your doctor says. Switch between them every 4 to 6 hours if needed.

### Limit Physical Activity:

- Don't let your baby do activities that may allow them to bump into things or fall.
- Do quiet, calm activities. Cuddle, read, or play with soft toys.

## When to Call the Doctor

Contact your doctor if you notice:

- Fever over 100.4°F (38°C).
- Ongoing throwing up or not wanting to eat.
- Signs of infection (redness, swelling, or discharge).
- Clear fluid is leaking or coming out of the incision.
- Your child sleeping too much, cranky, or that they don't calm down when crying.

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## Follow-Up Care

### Appointments:

- Go to all follow-up appointments to check healing and head shape.
- It is common for the first appointment to be 2 to 3 weeks after you leave the hospital.

### Helmet Therapy:

- If ordered by the doctor, follow instructions for helmet use. This includes schedules for wearing the helmet and for fitting it.

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## Contact Information

If you have any concerns or questions, don't hesitate to contact us.

### Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Craniosynostosis Program

- Plastic Surgery Clinic Phone: (323) 361-2154
- Neurosurgery Clinic Phone: (323) 361-2169

**After-Hours Emergency Line:** Call the hospital operator at (323) 660-2450.  
Ask to speak to the plastic surgery or neurosurgery resident on call.

