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Craniotabes

Craniotabes is a softening of the skull bones.

Causes

Craniotabes can be a normal finding in infants, particularly premature infants. It may occur in up to one third of all newborn infants.

Craniotabes is harmless in a newborn, unless it is associated with other problems. These can include rickets and brittle bones (osteogenesis imperfecta).

Symptoms

Symptoms include:

- Soft areas of the skull, especially along the suture line
- Soft areas pop in and out
- Bones may feel soft, flexible, and thin along the suture lines

Exams and Tests

Your health care provider will press the bone along the area where the bones of the skull come together. The bone often pops in and out, similar to pressing on a Ping-Pong ball if the problem is present.

No testing is done unless osteogenesis imperfecta or rickets is suspected.

Treatment

Craniotabes that are not associated with other conditions are not treated.

Outlook (Prognosis)

Complete healing is expected.

Possible Complications

There are no complications in most cases.

When to Contact a Medical Professional

This problem is most often found when the baby is examined during a well-baby check. Contact your provider if you notice that your child has signs of craniotabes (to check for other problems).

Prevention

Most of the time, craniotabes is not preventable. Exceptions are when the condition is associated with rickets and osteogenesis imperfecta.

Alternative Names

Congenital cranial osteoporosis

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