

CHAD PURNELL M.D.

CRANIOFACIAL AND PLASTIC SURGERY

Pre-and postoperative care instructions Craniosynostosis Surgery

Hospital Stay: Usually, hospital stay after craniosynostosis is 3-5 days. The first night is in the intensive care unit. During this time, we will get a CT scan to check the skull and brain and check laboratory values to make sure your child does not need any additional blood transfusion. Nurses will assist your child with pain control and feeding.

After the Operation:

- **Incision care:** For the first 2 weeks, apply bacitracin ointment to the incision 3-4 times daily, enough to keep the incision from drying out. You may wash the incision with soap and water during bathing as normal, but do not immerse the incision. It is very important to wash your child's hair every day, rinse it, and pat dry. Your child will have a plastic drain tube in place that will be taken out before you go home.
- **Pain Control:**
 - If your child is younger than 6 months, they can take acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 6 hours.
 - If your child is greater than 6 months of age, they can take acetaminophen every 6 hours and ibuprofen (Motrin) every 6 hours, so your child will get a medication every 3 hours.
 - The vast majority of children do not require opioid pain medications such as oxycodone after craniosynostosis surgery after they go home.
- **Diet:** Your child can return to their normal diet immediately after surgery in the ICU. This includes using a bottle as long as it has a soft nipple.
- **Activity:** Your child can return to normal activities after surgery. It is ok to hold them and comfort them. When you go home, your child will probably bump their head. If they do not need to come in to the emergency department unless it is a blow to the head that would normally cause you to go to the ER if they did not have surgery. When in doubt, call our office to discuss.
- **Bathing:** You may bathe your child normally with soap and water, including the incision. This can be done as early as 24 hours after the operation. The incision must be kept very clean and you should wash your child's hair every day after surgery. Do not immerse the incision under water until cleared.
- **Follow-up appointments:** Children are typically seen 2 weeks after the operation.

Things to let us know about:

- **Call the Office if:**

- Your child develops a temperature of **over 101 degrees** Fahrenheit (38.3 degrees Celsius) – it is **not** necessary to check temperatures after surgery unless you feel like something is wrong.
- Your child has **increasing redness, pain, weeping fluid, or swelling** at their surgical site. Swelling is normal for the first few days after surgery, but if swelling returns we would like to know. We also want to know if swelling develops around their eyes.
- **Your child is not drinking fluids** and is not making as many wet or dirty diapers as usual.
- **Your child is overly sleepy or has a seizure.**
- **If you have any concerns or questions**, contact us. We are used to receiving questions from parents and can help you decide if something is normal or abnormal after surgery.

Contact Information:

IF YOU ARE SEEN AT SHRINERS HOSPITALS FOR CHILDREN:

- Main hospital: 773-622-5400
- Inpatient Unit: 773-385-5590
- Nurse practitioners: Marisa Foss, CNP: 773-385-5597, mfoss@shrinenet.org (Tues-Fri) Patty Engebretson, CNP: 773-385-5595, pengebretson@shrinenet.org (Mon, Tues, Thurs)
- Outpatient clinic nurses: Jill McGuigan, RN and Sandy Ritt, RN: 773-385-5503
- Care coordination: Tina Magnole, LCSW: 773-385-5826 and Krista Bauman, LSW: 773-385-5560
- EMERGENCIES: 911

IF YOU ARE SEEN AT UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-CHICAGO:

- Main Hospital: 312-996-7546
- Outpatient nurses: Alma Moya, RN MEd 312-996-2512 Linda Duffy 312-996-4119
- Appointment Scheduling: 312-996-7546
- Surgery scheduling: 312-996-9313
- EMERGENCIES: 911