



What is a craniotomy or craniectomy?

A craniotomy or craniectomy is a procedure to remove part of the bone (bone flap) from the skull. A doctor does this so they can do brain surgery.

- If the bone flap is replaced after surgery, it is called a craniotomy.
- If the bone flap is not replaced, it is called a craniectomy.

Why does my child need a craniotomy or craniectomy?

Your child may need a craniotomy or craniectomy to:

- Relieve pressure inside the skull.
- Remove a brain tumor or blood clot.
- Treat other problems with the brain.

What happens after the craniotomy or craniectomy?

Some guidelines for care include:

- Your child's wound (incision) may be closed with sutures (stitches), Steri-Strips (special tape) or staples.
 - You may need to put antibiotic ointment on the wound at home. Your child's nurse can show you how to do this.
 - If no ointment is needed, keep the wound clean and dry.
- Bathe or shower your child and shampoo their hair as advised by the doctor. Rinse the hair well with clean water.
- To prevent infection, your child should not get in pools or hot tubs until the doctor says it is OK.
- Protect the wound from the sun for 6 months by using SPF 30 sunblock or a hat.
- Your child may have mild to moderate swelling around the face, head and eyes.

What else do I need to know?

- Give pain medicine as advised by your child's doctor. Avoid giving ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin or less costly store brand).
- If your child takes seizure medicine, give it as advised by the doctor.

When should I call the doctor?

Call your child's doctor **right away** if the wound:

- Drains fluid.
- Gets swollen, red or hot to touch.
- Begins to open or separate.
- Is more painful than normal.

Also call the doctor **right away** if your child:

- Is more irritable (fussy) than normal.
- Has any nausea or vomiting (throwing up).
- Is more tired or sluggish.
- Seems confused.
- Has a fever of 101°F or higher.

Call the doctor if you have questions or concerns about how your child looks or feels.

This teaching sheet contains general information only.

Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.