

Endoscopic Release of Cranial Sutures

Post-Operative Patient Instructions

Dr. Albert Woo, Pediatric Craniofacial/Plastic Surgery

Dr. Petra Klinge and Dr. Konstantina Svokos, Pediatric Neurosurgery

Pre-Surgical Preparation:

- You will be referred to *Northeast Orthotics* for a helmet before the date of surgery. They will contact you to set up an appointment for a laser scan. Out of state patients will be referred to the *Hangar Clinic*.

Northeast Orthotics
765 Allens Ave. #250
Providence, RI 02905
401-437-8016

- The helmet will be ready for fitting and may be picked up 1-2 days before the surgery. Bring the helmet with you on the day of surgery.
- The night before surgery, please wash your baby's hair with the shampoo you normally use.

Feeding

- For the first 1-2 days after surgery, your child will be given fluids intravenously through an IV directly into his or her veins. Immediately after anesthesia, your child may not be ready to eat, but once a few hours have passed, children may begin to take liquids by mouth.
- There is a small chance your child may require blood products in the first day or two after surgery. You should not be alarmed if this is necessary.
- It may take a few days for your child to return to the usual feeding regimen.
- One of the requirements for going home is that your child is drinking well, to avoid dehydration once you go home.
- At home, keep track of your child's oral intake and wet diapers. If you notice a significant decrease in either, your child may be dehydrated. If you are concerned about this, call your pediatrician or your surgeon.

Swelling

- Your child's head and face may become somewhat swollen after surgery. This swelling may increase for two to three days before it slowly starts to get better.
- While most children will be able to start helmet therapy the day after surgery, some children may require a few days for the swelling to decrease before the helmet fits comfortably. This is not an uncommon situation.

Wound Care

- Your child's scalp incision has been repaired with absorbable/dissolving stitches. They are covered with a layer of surgical glue (Dermabond). There is nothing that needs to be done with the incisions. The glue will flake off over time and the stitches will dissolve.
- You may wash your child's hair when you go home, including over the glue and incisions. Soap and water is safe. No special care is necessary.
- Do not apply Vaseline or antibiotic ointment to the incision as it can cause breakdown of the glue.
- **The helmet is designed to be worn 23 hours a day.** The staff at Northeast Orthotics will review with you the methods for achieving this. They may have you start with the helmet on for a short time and increase the time in increments over the next few days after surgery. Your baby will adjust to the helmet as long as you are consistent with keeping it on.

Fevers and Infection

- Almost all children have an elevated temperature or mild fever (less than 101.5) in the days after surgery. This is the natural result of a big operation, with the body trying to heal, and is usually not a reflection of infection.
- Infections after this surgery are uncommon.
- When infections do develop, it is usually not immediately after surgery, but 7 to 14 days afterwards.
- Signs of infection include:
 - The eyes swelling shut a second time (the initial post-operative period swelling is normal, but a second episode of swelling two weeks after surgery would be

- abnormal)
- Spreading swelling and redness around the incision
- Milky or foul-smelling drainage from the incision
- Fevers above 101.4 (early post-op fevers are very normal, but should resolve within about 7 days of surgery)
- If you are concerned about infection, please call our office. If you are concerned and would like immediate attention, please come to the Emergency Room at Hasbro Children's Hospital.

Activity & Sleep

- Your child may take several weeks to return to his or her usual routine and sleep patterns. It is not uncommon for sleep patterns to be disturbed for several weeks after surgery.
- Follow all your routine safety measures: car seats, seat belts in high chairs.
- Your surgeon will tell you when your child may return to daycare/school. Typically, not for two to three weeks.
- We understand that an occasional bump to the head may be unavoidable. Your child's reconstruction is not threatened by these minor traumatic events.

Pain Control

- Your doctor will prescribe the necessary pain medicine for your child.
- We typically find that within a day or two after surgery, children do not seem to have much pain. You may then stop the prescription pain medication and convert to **Tylenol**.
- If your child is not drinking well or is irritable, he or she could be in discomfort.
- Keep track of your child's bowel habits. He or she should return to usual bowel habits. If your child does not have a bowel movement every day, he or she may be constipated.
- Prune juice or over the counter laxatives may be helpful. Call your child's doctor or nurse if you think your child is constipated.

Emotional Recovery

- After endoscopic surgery, your child may be tired or irritable, particularly if there is swelling around the eyes. Healing for each child is different.
- In time, your child will return to his or her usual activities.

Follow-up

- Please contact Northeast Orthotics for a follow-up appointment to optimize helmet therapy. It is common to be seen roughly every two weeks initially, followed by monthly appointments thereafter.
- Your child will need to return for a follow-up appointment with Dr. Woo 3 weeks after surgery. **Call our office at (401) 444-2299 to arrange this appointment.**
- It is not uncommon for sleep patterns to be disturbed for several weeks after surgery.

When to Call Your Child's Doctor

- Your child has a fever over 101.5°F degrees
- Your child's eyes swell closed a second time
- There is increasing swelling and redness
- If your child is unable to be awakened or aroused
- If you are very concerned and would like to discuss any irregularities in your child's activity or behavior