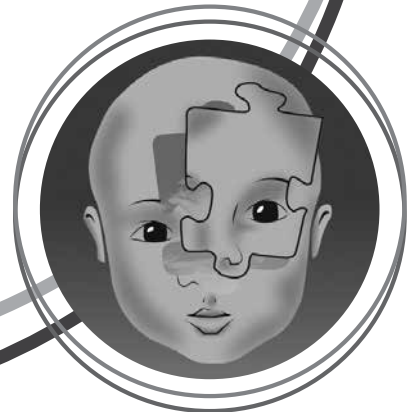


Oxford Craniofacial Unit

CRANIOFACIAL DISCHARGE ADVICE

Information for parents and carers



How to contact us

Craniofacial Nurse Specialist

Tel: 01865 231 083 or 01865 231 003

(8.00am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday)

Please leave an answerphone message outside of hours.

Email: craniofacial.unit@ouh.nhs.uk

For urgent advice outside of hours or at weekends:

Robin's Ward

Tel: 01865 231 254

Melanie's Ward

Tel: 01865 234 054

Main Hospital Switchboard

Tel 0300 304 7777

Your child has recently had craniofacial surgery. This booklet has been written to give you advice and support when you take your child home. If after reading this leaflet you have any questions, please speak to your child's nurse. If you have any questions or concerns when your child returns home, please contact us using the numbers at the front of this booklet.

Aftercare

Swelling and bruising is normal after this type of operation, particularly around the face and eyes. It can sometimes appear worse in the morning or after your child has been lying down.

It can take several weeks for all of the swelling to go down. During this time, try to stop your child from rubbing their eyes, as this can make them sore or might cause an infection.

If the wound starts to look swollen, red or begins to ooze, please contact us for advice.

The stitches in your child's head are dissolvable and will take several weeks to go. You may find that they begin to fall out when you wash or brush their hair.

As the swelling goes down, you may start to notice some uneven lumps and bumps on your child's head. These are normal and are where the bones are beginning to heal in their new positions. The surfaces will smooth out as the healing process continues. This can take time and is not a sign of a problem.

Washing your child's hair

- You should wash your child's hair every other day, or immediately if they get their scar line dirty.
- Wash your hands before touching your child's head.
- Use a mild baby shampoo (do not use conditioner).
- Use fresh tap water, rather than the bath water, to wet and rinse your child's hair.
- Lightly massage over the scar line with the tips of your fingers, when washing their hair, to gently remove any scabs.
- Avoid scratching the wound and brush their hair gently.

If you notice scabs forming along the scar-line, you can prevent them from becoming too big by gently applying a small amount of olive oil onto the scabs, half an hour before hair washing. This should soften the scabs and make them easier to remove when washing the hair.

If the scab begins to get bigger, becomes smelly or starts to look like the photo below, please contact us for advice.



You should avoid allowing the scar to become sunburnt. If the weather is sunny, keep your child's head covered with a hat. Once the wound is healed, use a good sun block on the scar.

Your child is likely to need some pain relief for a few days after they have gone home. They can be given paracetamol; please follow the instructions on the bottle.

If the pain does not seem to go away or becomes worse, please contact us for advice.

Getting back to normal

Knocks and bumps are a normal part of childhood. You don't need to be too protective; a gentle fall will not be too harmful. However, rough and tumble play should be avoided for a few weeks.

Your child should also avoid contact sports, bike riding and other similar activities until they have been reviewed by their doctor in clinic. Swimming should be avoided for a month after the operation, or until the wound is healed and all the stitches have gone.

If your child has a severe fall or bang to the head, please take them to your local health service, just as you would have done before they had surgery.

If a large swelling or bump appears on their head after a fall, please contact us for advice.

In an emergency, please call 999.

Nursery or school

Depending on your child's operation, they may need time off from school or nursery. This may be for 4 to 6 weeks. You should discuss this with your specialist nurse before your child goes home.

When your child returns to school or nursery you may need to ease them back in gently. We suggest starting with a few mornings and then increasing the time, as their energy builds back up.

If your child usually goes to a 'mother and baby' group, it is best not to go for a couple of weeks, to reduce the risk of them coming into contact with infections.

Vaccinations

If your child is due any vaccinations after the surgery, you should tell your specialist nurse. Most children will have had a blood transfusion during their operation and, because of this, must not have any live vaccinations for the next 3 months.

Holidays

If you are planning a holiday, please let your doctor know before you book it or make any travel arrangements. We do not recommend taking your child abroad until after their follow-up appointment. This is usually 3 months after their operation.

Follow-up

A follow-up appointment will be made before your child is discharged from hospital. If the date or time is not convenient, please let us know as soon as possible.

It is important that we monitor your child's progress, so please make sure you and your child come for this appointment.

This booklet is intended as a guide only.

If you have any concerns about your child's health, please seek medical attention.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALS@ouh.nhs.uk**

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