Posterior Cranial Vault Distraction

DISTRACTION HELPS THE HEAD GET BIGGER

Posterior cranial vault distraction is a surgical procedure to make the back of the skull bigger. As we expand the gap at a slow rate, new bone grows in the gap.

First, the surgeon makes a wavy incision over the top of the head. The surgeon then makes cuts around the bone to be expanded at the back of the skull. Metal distractors are placed along your child's bone and the incision is closed. The distractors slowly expand the gap between the bone edges with daily turning of the screws.

Your child's doctor will begin turning the distractors, during your hospital stay. You will learn how to turn the distractors before your child is discharged. Once you are home, you will continue to turn the distractors on a schedule.

Over the next several weeks, your child's skull will gradually expand and make new bone.

TURNING THE DISTRACTION DEVICE

Turn the distraction device as instructed by your physician. Missing a turning or turning too much can have serious consequences. Your physician has prescribed:

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1. Pick a convenient time.
   Many familes link the turning to other daily activities, for example in the morning at breakfast and in the evening as part of a bedtime routine. If you miss one turning by mistake, skip that one and perform the next turning at the regular time.

2. Start at the same screw each time.

3. Place the purple screwdriver over the screw with the flat surface of the handle facing up.

4. Turn the screwdriver clockwise (to the right, in the direction of the arrow), one complete turn. You will know when the turn is completed when the flat part of the screwdriver handle is on the top again. Then, slide the screwdriver out.

5. Complete one full turn on both screws.

AFTER YOU GO HOME

- Start supervised baths with shampoo after discharge from hospital. Do not submerge the distraction device. Use the shower attachment or a cup to gently pour the water over the hair.
- Take the liquid (oral) antibiotic as ordered until all of it is finished.
- Children's liquid acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be used as recommended on the box if your child is in mild discomfort.
- Walking and sitting upright are important for healing and will help decrease swelling.
- Initially, your child may only want to sleep on their back to avoid touching the device, however, any sleeping position is acceptable.
- Minimize unsupervised play with other children as much as possible.

WHEN TO CALL

- If you see redness or discharge (fluid) around the pin sites.
- If your child has persistent fever, headache, visual disturbances, irritability or is inconsolable.

FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION

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CRANIOSYNOSTOSIS CLINIC

All questions are welcome. We encourage you to call with any concern.

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