

Let's Talk About...

Craniosynostosis

Craniosynostosis (CRAY-nee-oh-sin-oh-STO-siss) occurs when two or more bones in your baby's skull grow together before the brain is fully formed. It is also called synostosis.

What happens when my baby has craniosynostosis?

Your baby's brain keeps growing even when the bones in the head fuse (grow together) during craniosynostosis. This changes the shape of your baby's head and can sometimes put pressure on their brain. It also keeps the brain and skull from growing properly.

What are the signs of craniosynostosis?

The signs of craniosynostosis may include:

- Raised, hard ridge along the sutures (skull bones) of your baby's head
- Abnormally shaped skull
- Delayed or slowed head growth as your baby grows
- Disappearing soft spot on your baby's head

How is craniosynostosis diagnosed?

Your baby's healthcare provider will look at your baby's head during check-ups. They will feel their head to see if any ridges have formed or your baby's head does not feel normal.

The healthcare provider may also need to take a CT scan of your baby's skull to see if any bones have fused.

What are the different types of craniosynostosis?

There are five types of craniosynostosis:

- **Sagittal:** Long, narrow skull (most common form)
- **Unicoronal:** Flattened forehead and brow
- **Metopic:** Triangle-shaped shaped forehead
- **Lambdoid:** Flattened back of the head and tilted top of the head (most rare form)
- **Multi-suture:** More than one suture is fused together

Your baby's healthcare provider will explain which type of craniosynostosis your baby has and how it is treated.



How is craniosynostosis treated?

Your baby may need both a helmet and surgery to correct their head shape and decrease the risk of pressure on their brain.

- **Endoscopic surgery:** Babies six months or younger with single-suture craniosynostosis can usually have this surgery. A surgeon makes a small opening in your baby’s scalp. They then use an endoscope (lighted tube and camera) to open the suture. This helps your baby’s brain have more room to grow. Your baby usually only needs to stay one night in the hospital, and the incision (scalp opening) is small. They will wear a molded helmet to help shape their head after the surgery.
- **Open surgery:** Babies older than six months usually must have open surgery. The surgeon makes an incision in the scalp and skull bones to reshape the skull. They then use plates or screws to hold the skull bones in place. These screws will eventually dissolve in your baby’s head. Your baby usually must stay in the hospital for three or four days. They may also need a blood transfusion. No helmet is needed for this procedure.

Notes

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