

# Let's Talk About...

## Skull Fracture

Your child has a skull fracture. Your child's doctor was able to diagnose this with the CT scan test or an x-ray. A skull fracture is a crack in one or more bones of the head. It takes a lot of force to cause a fracture. There could also be injury to the brain (concussion).

### What problems can my child have because of the skull fracture?

Your child may have some of these problems, or none of them. Each child is different. Many of these are normal for a child who has a fracture.

- Head pain or headache
- Less energy and getting tired more easily
- Decreased appetite that should improve slightly each day
- A swelling or "bump" on the head that goes away over 3 to 4 days
- Cut or abrasion over the fracture
- Throwing up or feeling like throwing up (seen with a concussion).

### What can I do to help my child heal?

A simple skull fracture will heal on its' own. It doesn't need a cast or splint and takes 6 to 8 weeks to heal completely.

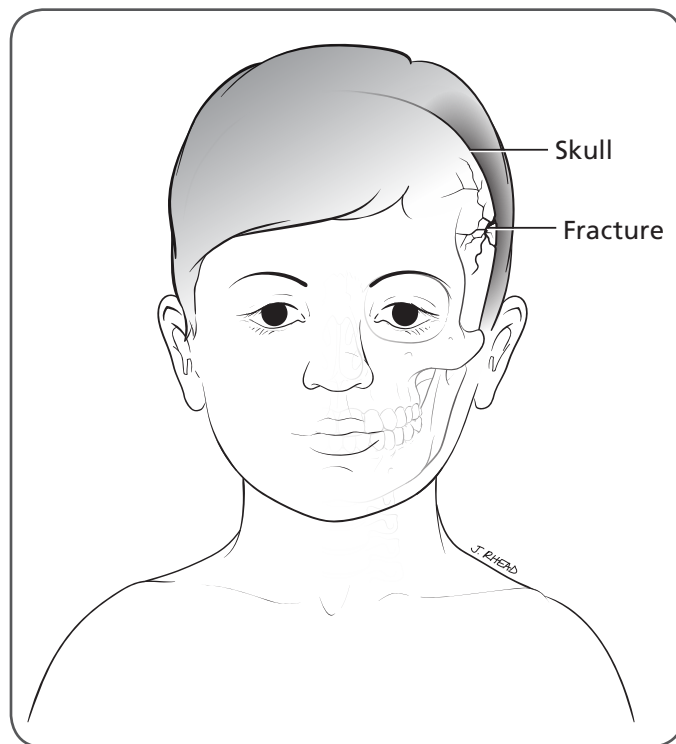
### Medicines

If your child has a headache, these medicines can help:

- **Acetaminophen:** This medicine can be used after 3 months of age. Check with your doctor or follow the product directions for how much to give your child. You can give this medicine every 4 hours.
- **Ibuprofen:** This medicine can be used after 6 months of age. Check with your doctor or follow product directions for how much to give your child. You can give this medication every 6 hours.

### Wound care

- Keep your child's wound clean and dry.



- Put an antibiotic ointment (like Neosporin) on the wound 3 times a day (such as morning, afternoon, and bedtime) until it heals.
- If your child has stitches or staples do not put them totally in water. For example, don't let her take a bath or swim. It's ok for your child to shower 24 hours after the staples or stitches are put in. Staples and stitches may need to be removed 5 to 10 days after they're put in. Your child's doctor will let you know.
- Watch the wound for signs of infection: yellow drainage, redness that is expanding, pain in the area that is getting worse, or a fever. Call your child's doctor if she has any of these.

### Diet

Encourage your child to drink lots of liquids and eat a balanced diet. Have her avoid high sugar foods (such as candy and sweets), carbonated beverages, and caffeine.

### Rest

Have your child get lots of rest. Make sure she gets at least 8 hours of sleep at night. Let your child take naps

or rest breaks when she's tired, but don't let her nap longer than 2 hours a day. This will help her sleep well at night.

## When can my child return to activity and school?

- Please restrict your child to walking- only activities until cleared for more activity by your doctor or a concussion specialist. Call to schedule your appointment with a doctor as written on your discharge instructions from the hospital.
- Your child should not participate in contact sports for 2 months.
- Your child should not participate in physical education classes at school for 2 months.
- If your child has a headache or is tired, she may need to stay home from school for 3 to 5 days after the injury.
- Let your child return to her regular activity gradually and increase her activities slowly. If she gets worse with activity, stop the activity and speak with your child's doctor.

## How can I prevent skull fractures in the future?

- Use proper child safety seats and other restraints while riding in a motor vehicle.
- Teach your child to wear a properly fitted helmet for biking, skateboarding, horseback riding, and when on a scooter and always buckle the strap.
- Have your child wear a proper helmet when skiing, snowboarding, and sledding.
- Have your child wear proper protective gear and follow state guidelines when operating a motor vehicle such as, ATV or motorcycle.

## When should my child see a doctor next?

Call to make an appointment for your child to see her primary care doctor within a week for a checkup.

## When should I bring my child to the Emergency Department?

Bring your child to the Emergency Department immediately if she has any of the following:

- Her pupils in her eyes (the black part) are of different sizes
- She vomits more than 3 times after she goes home
- Her arms or legs are weak or she has a hard time walking
- She is very drowsy or it's hard to wake her up
- She has slurred speech or she's confused
- She has liquid dripping from her nose or ears
- She has a severe headache or a headache that is getting worse
- She has seizures

## When should I take my child to see a specialist?

If your child also had a concussion and you are concerned because she still has problems from the skull fracture or problems with her performance in school, you may want to see a concussion specialist for follow-up testing.

To schedule an appointment with a concussion specialist, you may call:

- **The Rehabilitation Department at Primary Children's Hospital**  
(Children 5 years old and younger)  
100 North Mario Capecchi Drive  
Salt Lake City, UT 84113  
Phone: 801.662.4949
- **The Rehabilitation Team at University Orthopedic Clinic**  
(Children older than 5 years old)  
590 Wakara Way  
(East of Foothill Drive in Research Park)  
Salt Lake City, UT 84108  
Phone: 801.587.7109