VP Shunt
HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARENTS

Your child’s shunt has a valve or pump that looks like a small lump under the scalp above the ear. This pump regulates the flow of spinal fluid. It usually does not show when the hair grows back. It is OK for your child to lie on the side where the shunt is located, but do teach that there should be no playing with the pump or pushing on the pump. Attached to either end of the pump is a tube. One piece of tubing goes into the fluid filled space in the brain (the ventricle) and the other tube goes into the abdomen (the peritoneum).

The incision
The dressing can come off the day after you go home. Please see the Incision Care sheet from the Department of Neurosurgery for instructions.

Nutrition
A well-balanced diet is necessary for proper healing. This includes food from each of the basic food groups. The shunt tubing in your child’s abdomen will not affect normal digestion.

Activity
Your child may go back to normal activities unless otherwise directed by your neurosurgeon, but no rough playing, skating, bike riding, or other activities that could cause hitting the head for at least 6 weeks. No swimming until the stitches are removed. Your child may go back to these activities after the follow-up visit with the neurosurgeon, but rough team sports such as soccer, football, basketball or hockey are not recommended.

School
Your child may return to school in about 2 weeks when the stitches dissolve or any staples are removed. However, no PE activities for 6 to 8 weeks after the surgery. Ask your doctor or nurse for a note.

Call your doctor if your child has...
• redness, drainage or swelling of the incision or the area around the shunt
• fever of 101.5° F or greater
• vomiting or nausea that won’t stop
• seizure activity
• bulging or full soft spot (if your child’s soft spot is still open)
• increased sleepiness
• if you have any other questions concerning your child’s shunt

Neurosurgeon’s office phone

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