Pediatric Skull Fractures

Diagnosing a Skull Fracture
The medical team may order an X-ray or CT scan. Both can evaluate a fracture. Sometimes an additional scan is needed to identify injury behind the fracture.

Treatment of Skull Fractures
Generally, skull fractures will not need any type of special treatment. Linear skull fractures heal on their own and do not require specific treatment from the surgery team.

Basilar skull fractures, with an associated CSF leak, will require special treatment. It is important for your child to be hospitalized and monitored until the CSF stops leaking from their nose or ears.

Follow-up Care

Swelling around area of fracture
Common in children with skull fractures. Often peaks 3 to 7 days after the injury. It may take 4 to 6 weeks for the swelling to go away.

Activity
The Neurosurgery team will limit your child’s activity during recovery. The most important prevention: Keep your child from falling and hitting their head while healing.

Pain medicine
Your child may have some discomfort following the fracture. Your team will usually recommend over-the-counter medicine for discomfort.

Repeating Imaging
It is not necessary to repeat x-rays and CT scans for most children with skull fractures. Linear skull fractures heal over time and do not require repeat imaging.

Recovery
Most children will recover fully without complications after a skull fracture. There is generally no long-term damage to the brain.

Please Remember
1. Every child is different. It may take your child longer to heal than another child.
2. It is always important to call the clinic if you have any questions or concerns.