

Home care for babies who have had a CSF shunt inserted

Your baby has had a shunt inserted to relieve the symptoms of Hydrocephalus. The shunt is a tube, which drains fluid from the brain into the abdomen.

When a baby has a shunt inserted it is essential to try and prevent and reduce the risk of infection so it is important to wash your hands thoroughly before holding your baby. Even with extra care, the shunt can sometimes stop working or become infected. The highest risk period for infection is within the first four months after surgery. The symptoms of possible malfunction or infection are included in the following list:

- Fever (high temperature)
- Excessive irritability (unsettled, agitated)
- Bulging fontanelle, (soft spot on the head) even when not crying.
- Increase in the size of the head
- Repeated vomiting
- Poor feeding
- Lethargic, drowsiness
- Swelling around the shunt site on the scalp
- Redness around the wound on the scalp
- Oozing of fluid from the wound on the scalp
- Abdominal symptoms – pain/ tenderness and distension of the tummy
- Seizures (fitting)

If you notice any of the above symptoms, or have any other concerns about your baby, please go to the emergency department at Princess Margaret Hospital or your nearest hospital or visit your paediatrician or GP without delay.

You will receive letters at home informing you of various appointments with doctors and other health care professionals. Please attend all of those appointments or phone the department to rearrange.

Produced by: Neonatology Clinical Care Unit

Website: <http://wnhs.health.wa.gov.au>

© January 2014 WNHS 0611

WOMEN AND NEWBORN HEALTH SERVICE

King Edward Memorial Hospital

374 Bagot Road Subiaco WA 6008

Telephone: (08) 9340 2222



Delivering a Healthy WA

