Caput Succedaneum
(Caput)

Caput (head) Succedaneum is the swelling of a newborn baby's scalp. The swelling often occurs on the part of the scalp that leads the way through the birth canal. It is a result of fluid between the baby's scalp and skull during a vaginal delivery. This area is usually discolored following a vaginal delivery. Caput rarely happens with a c-section unless labor lasted a long time before delivering by a c-section.

CAUSES
- The baby's head develops mild trauma from resistance and friction as it passes through the birth canal.
- Prolonged labor (18 to 24 hours).
- The cervix fails to widen (*dilate*).
- The mother's birth canal is too small.
- Too little amniotic fluid (*oligohydramnios*) present.
- Using a vacuum extractor or forceps to deliver the baby.

SYMPTOMS
- A soft and puffy swelling under the baby's scalp.
- There may be bruising noticed where the swelling is.
- Visibly seeing the scalp bones of the head overlapping (*molding*).

DIAGNOSIS
- Your caregiver can make this diagnosis easily during an exam.
- An ultrasound or an X-ray can be used if necessary.
- A collection of blood (*hematoma*) may also cause a large swelling and should be ruled out if suspected.

TREATMENT
No treatment is required. The swelling will go down in two to three days with full recovery. The scalp will return to its normal shape. Draining off the fluid may cause an infection.

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