Ventriculoperitoneal (VP) Shunt Placement
Care After Surgery

Your infant or child had a ventriculoperitoneal shunt done. This is a surgery done to reduce *intracranial* (inside the skull) pressure caused by *hydrocephalus* (water on the brain). The fluid is drained from the fluid filled cavities in the brain into the *abdomen* (belly) or more rarely into the pleural space in the chest. This is the space between the ribs and the lungs. Babies or children having this surgery require very close observation after this is first done.

Please read the instructions outlined below and refer to this sheet for the next few weeks. These instructions provide you with general information on caring for your child after you leave the hospital. Your caregiver may also give you specific instructions. While the treatment is planned according to the most current medical practices available, unavoidable complications occasionally occur. If you have any problems or questions after discharge, please call your caregiver immediately.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

Symptoms of shunt malfunction or infection may include:

- Headache.
- Fever.
- Drowsiness.
- Irritability and/or sleepiness.
- Redness along the shunt tract. This is the path the catheter takes that you can feel under the skin.
- Convulsions.
- Abnormal behavior.
- Vomiting.
- Loss of coordination or balance.
- Vision problems.
- Swelling along the shunt tract.

Other problems which may need immediate medical care include:

- Development of a rash.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Developing any reaction or side effects to medicine given.

IN AN INFANT, SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF PROBLEMS MAY ALSO INCLUDE:

- Swollen or raised soft spot.
- Feeding problems.
- Fussiness, irritability or a high-pitched cry.
- Spitting up or vomiting.

With any shunt, make sure to call if you have worries or questions which have not been answered. Also call or seek medical care any time your child has a temperature or any of the above problems, and you have no explanation for them. Keep all follow-up appointments as directed.

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