

Fact Sheet 1

REFERRAL PROCESS TO ACCESS A CRANIOFACIAL SPECIALIST

Access to craniofacial services may differ across states.

There may also be differences depending on whether you wish to access services through the public or private health care system. Private specialists may provide shorter wait times compared with public health care services, as well as the ability to choose your specialist. However, it is essential to check costs. If you have private health insurance, you should also check that it covers the consultations and treatments.



Arranging a referral to a craniofacial clinic (e.g., in a hospital) or a craniofacial specialist (e.g., in private practice) in Australia typically involves the following:

1. Primary Care Physician (GP) or Specialist Referral: Start by discussing your concerns with your primary care physician (GP) or a specialist, such as a paediatrician or a dentist. They can assess the condition and determine if a referral to a craniofacial specialist is necessary.

2. Referral to a Craniofacial Specialist: If your doctor determines a need for specialised care, they will refer you to a craniofacial clinic/specialist. This referral usually includes details of your medical history and the reason for the referral. You can be referred to either a public hospital-based craniofacial specialist or a private craniofacial/plastic surgeon.

(continued overleaf)



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3. Appointment Scheduling: Once the referral is processed, you will be contacted by the craniofacial clinic/specialist to schedule an appointment. They will provide you with information about the appointment date, time, and any specific preparation required or documents you might need to bring. Most public craniofacial units involve teams which may involve more than one specialist, such as:

- Surgeons
- Speech pathologists
- Psychologists
- Dentists
- Orthodontists
- Ophthalmologists
- Audiologists
- Social workers
- Geneticists

Your craniofacial surgeon or your clinic coordinator will advise you which of these specialists your child may need to see.

4. Initial Assessment and Treatment Plan: During your visit to a craniofacial specialist, they will conduct a thorough assessment, including reviewing previous medical information and performing an examination. You may also need to undertake imaging studies (like X-rays or CT scans). The specialist will discuss treatment options and work with you to develop a personalised treatment plan based on the diagnosis.

5. Follow-Up Care: Depending on the diagnosis and treatment plan, you may require ongoing follow-up care at a hospital/craniofacial clinic to monitor progress, adjust treatments, or address any new concerns.



It is essential to follow the steps outlined by your healthcare provider to ensure you receive the appropriate care from a craniofacial specialist.

This information is based on the expertise of clinicians who work with families affected by craniofacial conditions and the lived experience of parents with children who have been diagnosed with craniosynostosis. We thank everyone who contributed to this fact sheet.



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How we can support you:

- Care packs
- Financial assistance
- Family support coordinator
- Connection to other families

