Temporal Bone Fractures

Where is my temporal bone?
You have two temporal bones, one on each side of your head. The temporal bone is the bone that goes around your ear, in your skull. It protects the part of your brain that controls hearing, speech, memory, and behavior.

What is a temporal bone fracture?
A fracture is a broken bone. When this bone has a break, it is often due to a blow to the side of the head or a piercing in the bone around the ear by an object.

What are the signs and symptoms?
- Hearing loss
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness
- Leaking of cerebral spinal fluid from your nose or ears

- Facial nerve paralysis
- Bruising

What tests will I need?
- CT scan of your head
- A test to check your hearing
- Facial nerve test

What are some of the complications?
- Hearing loss
- Long-term dizziness or balance problems
- Facial nerve damage
- Infection

How is it treated?
Treatment will depend on your injuries. Some fractures need surgery to heal and some do not. If you have hearing loss, there is a good chance that it will go away on its own, and you will recover fully. If the hearing loss continues, you may need surgery to repair the structures within your ear.

How long will treatment last?
It could take a month or more to heal fully from your fracture. The time you spend in the hospital will depend on your injuries. It may take 6-8 weeks for the bruising around the temporal nerve to go away. You could have a trouble with your hearing that whole time. A repeat hearing test and follow-up with Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) clinic may be required after you have healed.
**Phone Numbers**

- Patients of the ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) Clinic: Call **(608)263-6190** with questions.
- After hours, nights, weekends and holidays, call UW Hospital Paging Operator at **608-262-0486**. Ask for the resident on call for your clinic. Leave your name and phone number with area code. The doctor will call you back.
- If you live out of the area, call **1-800-323-8942** and ask for your clinic.

---

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©10/2017. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#6932.