

Encephalocele

In this rare disorder the infant is born with a gap in the skull. Membranes that cover the brain and tissue protrude through this gap. When this gap is not covered by skin, infection or swelling of the membranes may occur. Encephalocele patients can develop hydrocephalus (excess of spinal fluid in the head resulting in pressure in the skull and widening of the cerebral spaces resulting in an unusually large head).

When an encephalocele is located on the *back* of the skull, it is often part of Merkel Syndrome (a rare inherited disorder in which congenital brain deformities results in mental retardation).

Encephalocele occurs 1:2,000 live births affecting males and females equally.