

The Gazette

Tumour gone, tot makes history

Removed through scalp. Operation at the Montreal Children's is believed to be a first in Canada

BY IRWIN BLOCK, THE GAZETTE SEPTEMBER 2, 2009

A few weeks after Jayden Cambridge was born in February his parents noticed something was wrong. A bump the size of a large blueberry sat prominently in the middle of the baby's forehead.

Their pediatrician at first suggested it might recede, but it did not.

Last week plastic surgeon Dr. Nabil Fanous performed what is believed to be a medical first for Canada, removing the tumour through Jayden's scalp. The operation was carried out at the Montreal Children's Hospital.

His parents, Rod Cambridge and Tanya Comeau, are thrilled with the results.

"He won't have that scar on his forehead, which would get bigger as he grows," Cambridge said yesterday.

"Everyone was fantastic with us, pre- and post- surgery. They told us what to expect and were available, almost 24/7."

The search for a solution began when the family consulted Dr. Sherif Emil, director of pediatric surgery at the Children's. Emil ordered a CAT scan and determined that it was a benign tumour - a sac called a "dermoid cyst."

Because it could grow or rupture, Emil wanted it removed.

But the traditional method - cutting into the skin and muscle directly above the growth - leaves an ugly scar that becomes more unsightly as the patient ages - even more so for Jayden, who has dark skin.

Emil had read an article about a new technique used by pediatric surgeons at Stanford University in California - endoscopic excision of benign forehead masses by entering with a camera and precision instruments through the scalp to avoid scarring the face.

But to the best of the surgeon's knowledge, it had never been done on a baby in Canada.

He began a search for the right surgeon and contacted Fanous, associate professor of facial and plastic surgery and head surgery at McGill and Sherbrooke universities, who immediately said yes, it was technically feasible.

His only concern was the "forest" of muscles, nerves and vessels under the skin.