

The Skull



safety!

Although your skull is strong, heading a ball in soccer can damage your brain and give you a *concussion*.

The Brain's Helmet

Imagine you're playing soccer. You race after the ball but another player is in the way. You collide and hit your head. *Ouch!* Your head probably hurts, but your brain should be okay thanks to your hard, bony *skull*.

The skull is hard and rigid. It is made of bones. It supports and protects a very important part of your body—your brain. The brain plays a large role when you move, speak, think, eat, breathe, and more. However, the brain is soft and delicate, so the skull must be hard enough to keep the brain protected. The skull is like a natural helmet for the brain.

Look in the mirror. Do you see the round, oval shape of your head? How about the location of your eyes, ears, and mouth? Your skull gives your whole head its unique shape!



Your brain is so important, sometimes you need more than just your skull to protect it.

Head of the Class

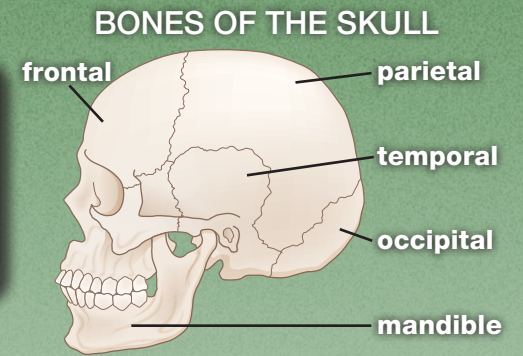
As your body grows and develops, so does your skull. The living tissue in the skull grows and changes in order to make room for your growing brain. An adult's head is bigger than your head because it has had more time to grow. But don't worry! You'll catch up. Your brain and skull don't stop growing until you're an adult.



As your brain grows, your skull grows, too.

Wowser!

The adult human skull is made up of twenty-two bones. There are fourteen bones in the face and eight bones in the cranium.



Do You Know?

Even though teeth are part of the head, they are not bones. They are made of a material called *dentin*.

A Soft Spot

Have you noticed that babies have soft spots on their heads? These soft spots are called *fontanel*s. Babies have fontanel because their brains grow quickly. The fontanel make a little more space in the skull for the growing brain. It is extra important to protect a baby's head. Any damage could last for a lifetime.



As the baby gets older, the hard skull grows over the fontanel and covers them. You used to have soft spots on your head, too. But now your skull is stronger.

Do You Know?

The jawbone is called the *mandible*. Because it can open and close, you can chew your food and speak. In fact, it is the only bone in your skull that you can move!