

Swelling in Giffords' brain crucial to survival

The surgeon labouring to save Rep. Gabrielle Giffords' life says that the critical step is to quickly ease pressure within the closed vault of the skull, keeping swelling from crushing delicate nerve centres, vital for survival

Bullet trajectory

9mm bullet entered back of skull and exited at front, travelling through left side of brain

KEY AREAS CLOSE TO BULLET'S PATH

Left motor cortex

Controls movements of right side of body

Sensory strip

Processes feelings of touch

Left parietal lobe

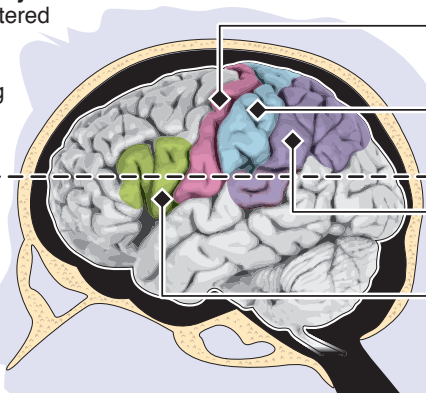
Controls ability to understand speech

Broca's area

Motor control of speech



Top view



Surgery: Wedge of skull removed to permit brain to swell. Bone is preserved by putting it on ice and reattached when swelling subsides

Source: University Medical Centre, Tucson

Glock 19
pistol



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