

Subdural empyema

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Subdural empyema refers to an infected fluid collection in the subdural space. This may develop as a result of sinusitis, mastoiditis or meningitis, and can complicate trauma or surgery . Figure 48.12 shows a subdural empyema associated with osteomyelitis of the frontal bone and associated scalp swelling – Pott’s puffy tumour. In empyema, pus will generally collect in the parafalcine region and over the convexity , triggering inflammation and thrombosis in the cortical veins, which helps to explain the high mortality of 8–12%. Presentation mimics that of meningitis and cerebral abscess; typical CT appearances are of hypodense or isodense subdural collection, with contrast enhancement at the margins and often swelling and midline shift. Summary box 48.6 Subdural empyema

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