

# Normal and Abnormal Fetal Face Atlas



Ultrasonographic Features

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## Foreword

In the field of obstetrics and fetal medicine, there are a few invariables in clinical use of ultrasounds. The operator must have a clear representation of the structures he or she is analyzing and the possible anomalies, which supposes knowledge of basic physiology, anatomy, and embryology. He or she must be able to use the spectrum of technical solutions available, know what to expect from them, and use them in the most up-to-date fashion, such as not generating images that are aesthetically pleasing but lack information. He or she should take a systematic approach, standardizing imaging via an analysis through the planes of symmetry; the idea is to be able to reproduce the examination and to avoid creating nice-looking but fallacious images. When it is pertinent, use of objective quantitative criteria should be privileged.

Communication should also be taken into consideration—a communication based on transmitting information rather than producing flashy images. It is important to understand the expectations of the various partners involved—geneticists, pediatricians, surgeons, and parents—and be able to respond to their specific questions.

Sharing experience is an important part of our practice. Teaching involves disseminating knowledge and showing targeted images; it also involves transmitting how to obtain these images via a multitude of approaches: words, screen captures, hands-on tutoring, and live demonstrations.

This list must also include (self-) assessment, which is at the heart of any responsible practice.

This atlas of normal and abnormal fetal face ultrasound imagery presented by Jean-Marc Levailant, Jean-Philippe Bault, Bernard Benoit, and Gérard Couly fits this approach. It provides a clear, didactic approach with a review of the basic embryology and anatomy needed to understand the images, along with up-to-date clinical knowledge and the links between clinical practice and the images under both normal and various pathological situations. It also includes a collection of biometric curves. Beyond the images themselves, readers will appreciate the authors' explanations of the optimization and utilization of the various ultrasound imagery modes, as well as how to obtain the various shots and corresponding images.

In this respect, this atlas is another step in the development of the French School of Gynecological and Obstetrical Ultrasonography, which includes some major developments, including pioneering developments in 3D ultrasonography in collaboration with Philips Research Laboratories, followed by the first industrial developments with KretzTechnic; training in 2D and 3D

ultrasound imagery at the Saint-Denis Ultrasound School, with trainers from all over France and let by the tireless and ubiquitous applied engineer Bernard Meyer; and journal publications on fetal face ultrasound imagery.

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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction Craniofacial Epigenesis in Vertebrates</b>	1
1.1	The Key Stages in Craniofacial Development	1
1.1.1	Cell Death	8
1.1.2	Genetic Determinants and Differentiation of Intra-prominence Cellular Phenotypes	8
1.2	Cellular Phenotypes Originating from the Neural Crest	8
1.3	Summary	15
<b>2</b>	<b>Normal Face</b>	17
2.1	What Is Included in a Basic Sonographic Survey and a Diagnostic Sonographic Survey?	18
2.2	Routine Trimester Examinations	19
2.2.1	First Trimester	19
2.2.2	The Second and Third Trimesters	23
2.2.3	Spotlight on the Third Trimester	28
2.3	Biometrics of the Face	36
2.3.1	Thickness of the Forehead Skin	36
2.3.2	Length of Philtrum	38
2.3.3	The Nasal Bones	39
2.4	Facial Angles	40
2.4.1	Upper Facial Angle	40
2.4.2	Lower Facial Angle	41
2.4.3	Measurements of the Inter-orbital Distance	42
2.4.4	Measurements and Views of the Mandibular and Maxillary Width	44
2.5	Practical Review Work	50
<b>3</b>	<b>Clefts and Pierre-Robin Syndrome</b>	57
3.1	Clefts	57
3.1.1	Introduction	57
3.1.2	Symptomatic Analysis of Clefts	58
3.1.3	Ultrasound Diagnosis of Clefts: Analytical Study	60
3.1.4	Cleft Algorithm	68
3.1.5	Ultrasound Diagnosis of Labioalveolar-Palatal Clefts: Summary	70
3.1.6	The Decision-Making Process After the Discovery of a Facial Cleft	72



3.2	Pierre-Robin Syndrome . . . . .	73
3.2.1	How to Screen for Retrognathia . . . . .	73
3.2.2	What to Look for in Cases of Retrognathia . . . . .	76
<b>4</b>	<b>Dysmorphism</b> . . . . .	<b>79</b>
4.1	How to Define Objective Facial Dysmorphism . . . . .	79
4.2	Tools for This Study . . . . .	79
4.3	Dysmorphism of Major Chromosomal Anomalies . . . . .	79
4.3.1	Trisomy 21 . . . . .	79
4.3.2	Trisomy 18 . . . . .	85
4.3.3	Trisomy 13 . . . . .	87
4.4	Upper Face Pathologies . . . . .	95
4.4.1	Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome . . . . .	95
4.4.2	Craniostenosis . . . . .	95
4.5	Mid-Face Pathologies . . . . .	107
4.5.1	Achondroplasia . . . . .	107
4.5.2	Maxillo-Facial Dysplasia: Binder Syndrome . . . . .	112
4.5.3	Thanatophoric Dysplasia . . . . .	117
4.5.4	Prader-Willi Syndrome . . . . .	120
4.5.5	Otopalatodigital Syndrome . . . . .	122
4.6	Lower Face Pathologies . . . . .	123
4.6.1	Otomandibular Dysplasias . . . . .	123
4.6.2	Beckwith-Wiedemann Syndrome . . . . .	131
4.6.3	Fetal Alcohol Syndrome . . . . .	135
4.7	Multiple-Level Pathologies . . . . .	138
4.7.1	Cornelia de Lange Syndrome . . . . .	138
4.7.2	Williams-Beuren Syndrome . . . . .	144
4.8	A Few Additional Syndromes . . . . .	147
4.8.1	CHARGE Association . . . . .	147
4.8.2	Noonan Syndrome . . . . .	154
	References . . . . .	158
<b>5</b>	<b>Facial Tumors</b> . . . . .	<b>163</b>
5.1	Teratomas . . . . .	163
5.2	Hemangiomas . . . . .	166
5.3	Lymphangiomas . . . . .	168
5.4	Expansive Process of Brain Tumors . . . . .	171
5.5	Pai Syndrome . . . . .	173
	References . . . . .	174
<b>6</b>	<b>The Eye</b> . . . . .	<b>175</b>
6.1	Embryology Review . . . . .	175
6.1.1	Ultrasound of a Normal Eye . . . . .	175
6.1.2	Main Aspects of Ocular Pathologies . . . . .	182
	References . . . . .	197
<b>7</b>	<b>Biometric Parameters</b> . . . . .	<b>199</b>
7.1	The Eyes . . . . .	199
7.2	The Lens . . . . .	203
7.3	Vitreous Circumference . . . . .	203
7.4	Ocular Diameter . . . . .	205

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7.5	Lens Circumference.....	205
7.6	The Ear.....	206
7.7	Nasal Bones.....	210
7.8	Nose Width.....	210
7.9	Nostrils.....	211
7.10	Maxillary Bone Length.....	212
7.11	Alveolar Ridge Width.....	213
7.12	Tongue.....	213
	7.12.1 Skin Thickness Facing the Forehead.....	214
7.13	Length of Philtrum.....	215
7.14	The Ears.....	216
7.15	Lower Facial Angle.....	217
7.16	Upper Facial Angle.....	218
7.17	Maxillary Width.....	219
7.18	Mandibular Width.....	220
7.19	IOD.....	221

The facial bones, as they appear in a fetal ultrasound image, result from a continuous process of development, regulated and sequenced by genetic and molecular embryology, which progressively constructs the face like epigenesis.

The face, like the entire head, is “prefigured” by prescribed regions that are genetically determined during the gastrula and neurula stages. Via typological deformations, the two-dimensional neural surface transforms symmetrically and acquires a third dimension.

When the dorsal region of the neural groove closes into a tube, the “fourth layer” of migrating neural crest cells invade the future embryonic cephalic pole and provide the cellular filling for the facial prominences.

The face develops thanks to the five founding prominences or swellings of the ectoderm, which grow volumetrically and then fuse by contact and are no longer recognizable as having existed once the face is totally formed. These prominences are:

- The frontonasal prominence, which is median, single, symmetrical and different from the other four as it is formed by two left and right halves.
- The maxillary prominences, right and left.
- The mandibular prominences, right and left (first branchial arches).

## 1.1 The Key Stages in Craniofacial Development

*The prescribed regions of the face and brain are differentiated as early as the gastrula and neurula stages.*

**Gastrulation** lays out the embryonic body plan for all vertebrates with bilateral symmetry via the formation of the notochord and the mesoderm interposed between the endoderm and the ectoderm (Fig. 1.1) (this beginning explanation of epigenesis or the phenomenology of development by stages replaced the eighteenth century concept of preformation that stemmed from the building of the first microscope, when Leeuwenhoek, its inventor, identified the spermatozoid in 1677).

The future regions of the face are situated in the rostral regions of the gastrula.

Neurulation is a theater of morphogenetic operations that will differentiate the prescribed regions of the head (Fig. 1.2). This is the stage during which the central nervous system, the facial mass and the neck truly begin their morphogenesis.

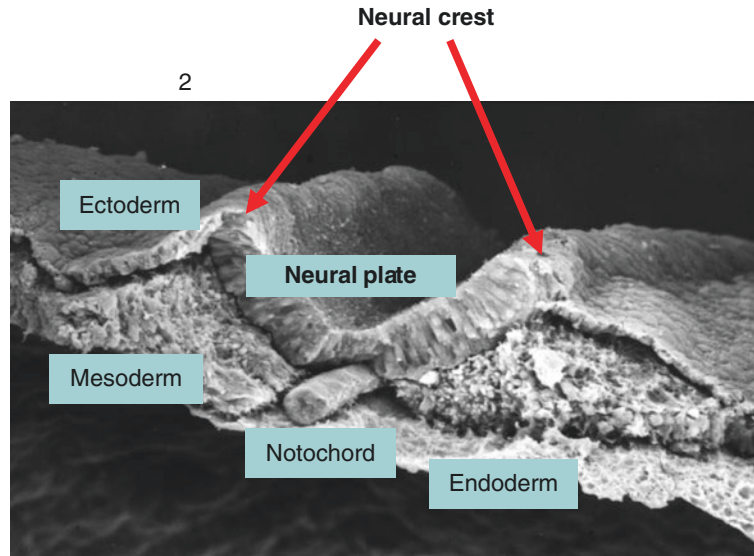
The neural plate is the two-dimensional cellular surface whose fate mapping demonstrates the closeness and unity of the regions of the brain, the neuro-sensorial receptors, and the face, genetically “printed” on the neural plate.

Nicolas Hartsoeker' homunculi, 1694: the human fetus develops in full in the spermatozoid.

Caspar F. Wolff's epigenesis, 1759: development via successive stages with layers having different roles



1



Vertebrate embryo in early neurula stage.

**Fig. 1.1** Preformationism vs. epigenesis. 1 Homunculus. 2 End of gastrula phase, beginning of neurula stage

**During neurulation, the topological transformation of the neural plate continues. The face is in the neurula and “grows” in front of it (Fig. 1.3).**

The neural plate lengthens and folds, forming a groove with edges rising up and fusing into a tube (Figs. 1.4 and 1.5).

Closure of the neural tube's rostral opening represents an exceptional topological originality (Fig. 1.6): the anterior-most parts of the neural plate roll up forward, completing a half-circle rotation ( $180^\circ$ ), flipping these regions into a ventral position (it is an elegant and original solution to the problem of closing a tube that is open in the front (Figs. 1.7 and 1.8).

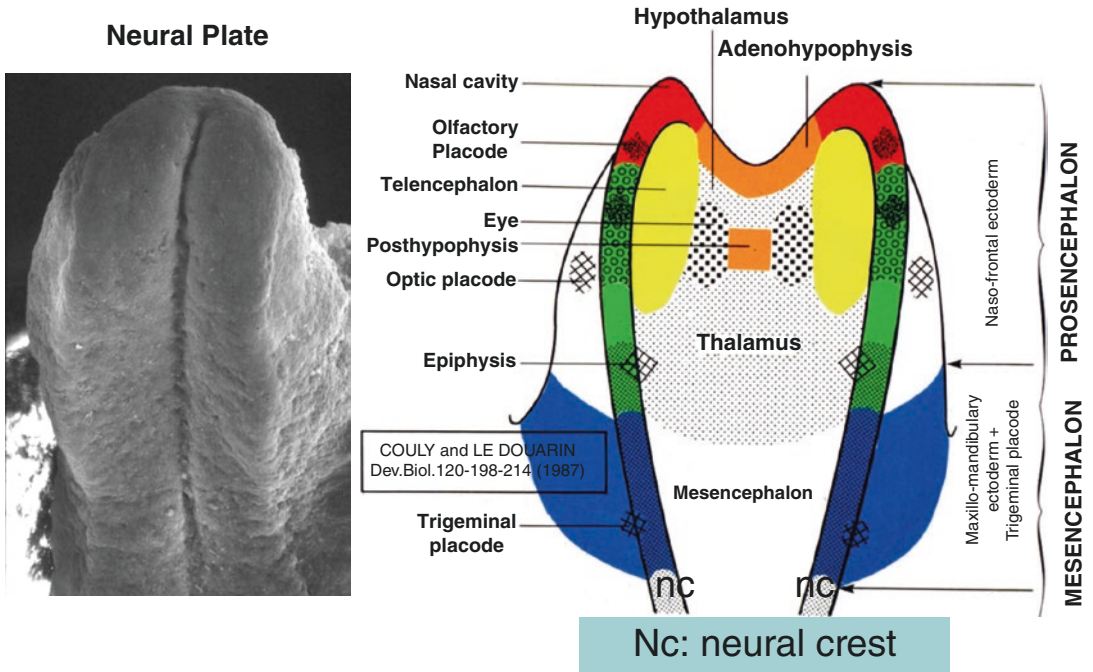
The lateral edges of the neural tube come together and fuse in the middle. As a result, the adenohipophysis (Fig. 1.9), initially the anterior-most neuro-ectodermic region, moves

under the diencephalon and thus becomes the posterior-most region, above the future stomodeum. The two olfactory placodes sprout nerves and the olfactory apparatus, initially located above and on either side of the telencephalon and the adenohipophysis, approach the median line due to the median fusing of the neural ridges and position themselves ventrally under the tele-dicephalon, or the anterior brain (Fig. 1.10).

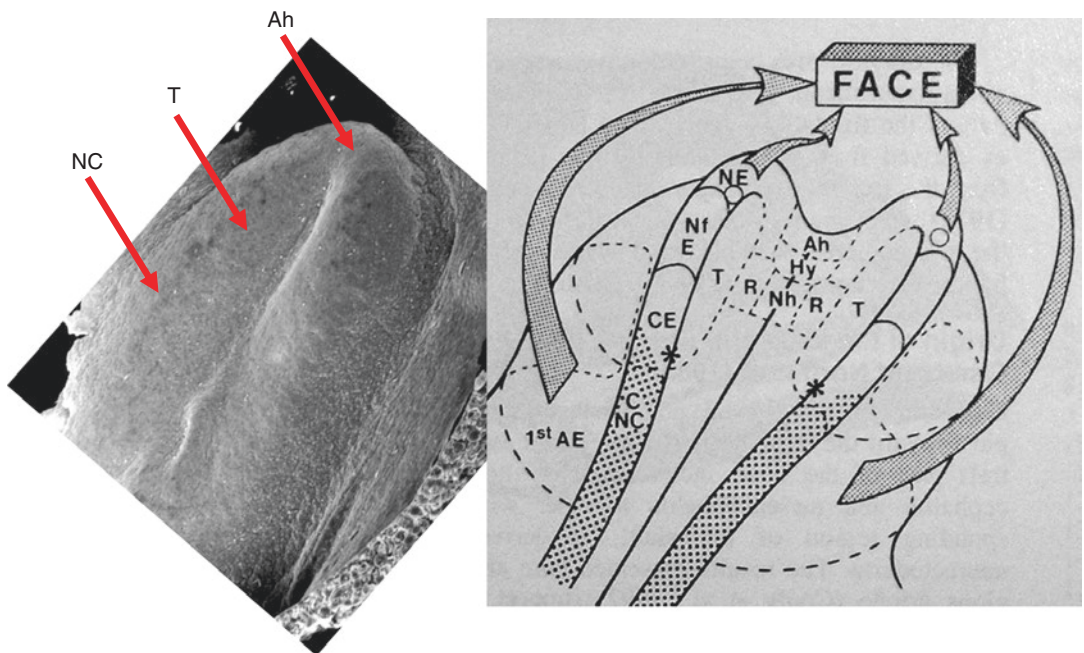
This is how the future nasal cavities and the rhinencephalon are linked for the sense of smell.

Jointly, the retina surfaces on the neural plate “blister” outwards and becomes the optic cups and then the optic vesicles (see Fig. 1.7).

*The dorsal closure of the neural tube by molecular fusion triggers the migration of cephalic neural crest cells (CNCC) (see Figs. 1.4, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14 and 1.15).*

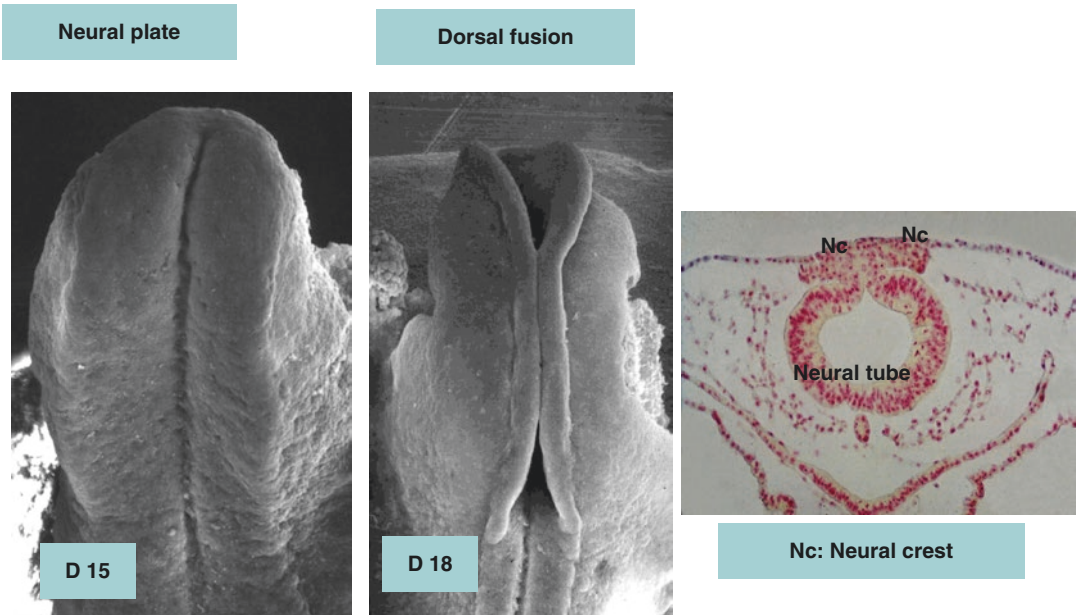


**Fig. 1.2** Map of neural plate regions

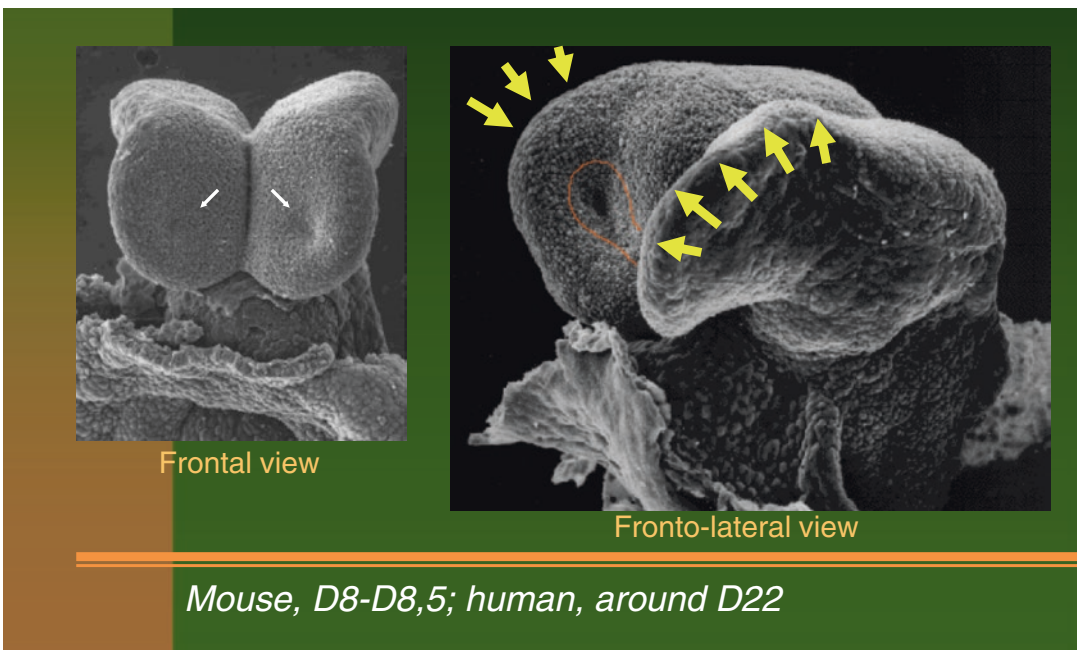


**Fig. 1.3** The face grows in front of the neural plate

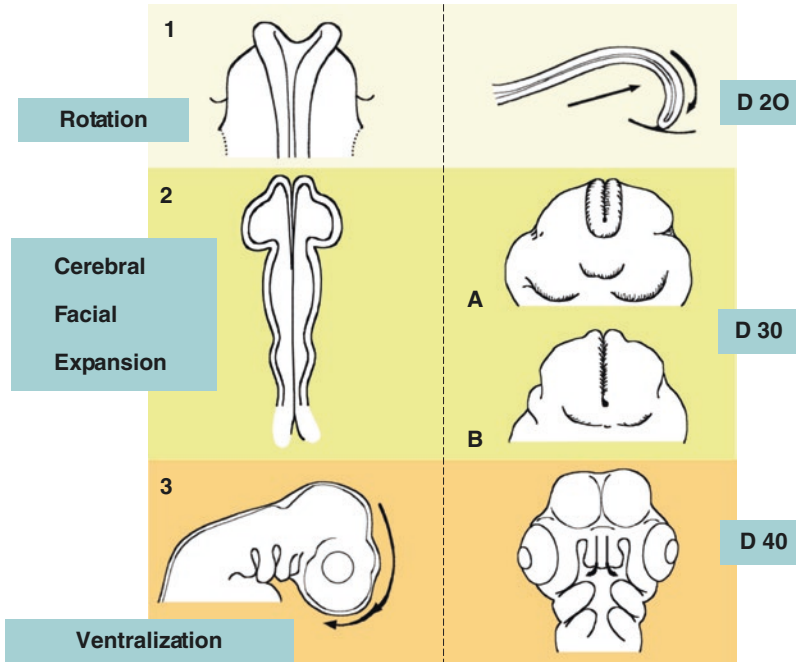




**Fig. 1.4** Closure of the neural plate into the neural tube, with neural crest  
*D 15* – The neural plate  
*D 18* – Dorsal fusion  
*NC* Neural crest  
 Neural tube

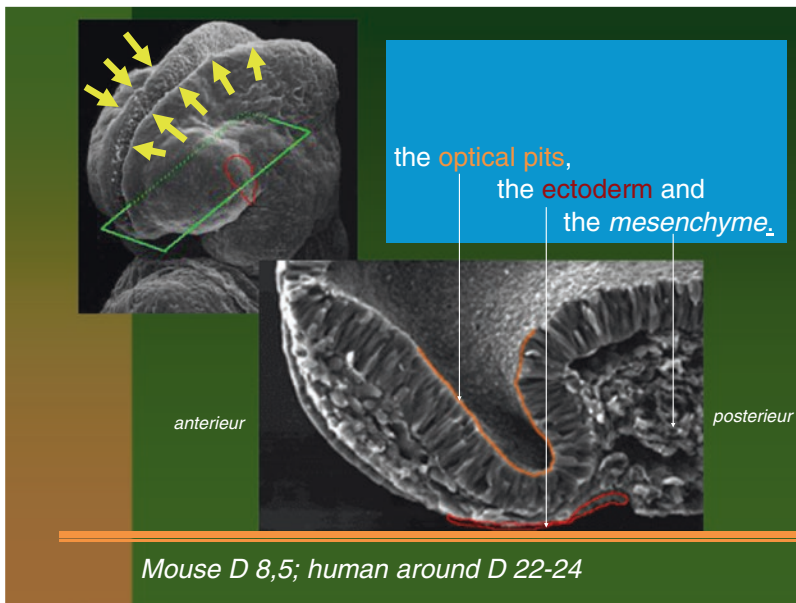


**Fig. 1.5** Topogenesis of the anterior neural plate and beginning of the optic cup.  
 The optic cups invaginate. Elevated neural ridges move closer together on the dorsal side of the embryo  
 Frontal view  
 Fronto-lateral view  
 Mouse, D8-D8, 5; human, around D22



**Fig. 1.6** Overall ventral rotational movement of the rostral extremity of the embryo

1. Rotation–D20
2. Facial cerebral expansion – D30
3. Ventralization – D 40



**Fig. 1.7** Optical vesicles and the median closure of the rostral extremity

In this cut, one can observe the links between:

The optical buds, the ectoderm and the mesenchyme

Anterior

Posterior

Mouse D8, 5; Human around D22-24