

Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery

Cleft palate repair: post-operative information

Pain control

- Your child may be a little unsettled for 1-3 weeks after a cleft palate repair and require extra attention.
- You should give paracetamol and/or codeine as required for pain relief, usually only for a few days.
- Regular pain medication is recommended for the first few days, particularly before feeds.
- You should avoid aspirin as it may cause bleeding.
- If you are at all concerned about your child's progress, please contact the hospital.

Appearance

After cleft palate surgery there will be stitches in your child's mouth. The stitches are dissolvable — they will start to dissolve in 7-10 days.

Recovery

Two to three weeks are needed before healing is complete and some children remain unsettled for this length of time. After a cleft palate repair, care must be taken not to bump your child's palate — the area is very delicate during healing.

Diet

Your child can feed using the same bottle or breast feeding method as before surgery. Care should be taken to avoid placing any objects such as straws into the mouth. Use a spoon carefully for any puréed solids. Avoid hard foods such as toast, biscuits or rusks during healing.

You need to keep the mouth as clean as possible and should rinse the mouth with cooled boiled water after feeding. You can do this by having your child drink the water.

Dummies

Ask your plastic surgeon about the use of a dummy. Some plastic surgeons ask you to avoid using a dummy for up to a month after the operation.

Arm splints

Your child may need to wear arm splints after surgery to prevent them from putting anything near the mouth as it heals. Arm splints are usually required for around 10 days. You should make sure you allow your child time without the arm splints several times a day, but please supervise them closely to make sure they don't put anything in their mouth.

Seek medical attention if your child has:

- Increasing pain or pain not relieved by medication.
- Persistent bleeding.
- Persistent fever.
- General unwellness.
- Wound discharge or for any concerns about infection of the suture line.
- Persistent poor oral intake.

Follow up

A review appointment should be made to see your surgeon within 1–4 weeks.

Your child should also be seen by the multidisciplinary Cleft Team at Cleft Clinic at around 3 years of age.

If you have any concerns, contact:

The Cleft Coordinator

Telephone 9345 6582

Department of Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery

Telephone 9345 6583

Platypus Ward

Telephone 9345 5433



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