

## Follow up appointments



Your child's operation is one of a number of operations to help your child's speech or feeding. It is important that your child continues to be reviewed by the cleft team. This will allow the team to check for any problems

that may develop, and to plan further operations. Please ensure that your child attends all their appointments. You should organise an appointment with your child's local speech and language therapist for 4 weeks after their operation. The cleft team will review speech at a hospital based clinic 3 months after surgery.

The quality of your child's speech may vary after surgery due to swelling in their mouth. Your child's speech may sound as if they have a cold or it may sound better for the first few days and then become more nasal in the following weeks. When the swelling has reduced the speech and language therapist can evaluate your child's speech. If your child has other problems such as making correct speech sounds, you may not notice any change until they have had speech and language therapy in your local clinic.

If you are unable to attend your child's appointment please contact the Cleft & Craniofacial office as soon as possible to rearrange your child's appointment.

Jane Gunn, Cleft Lip & Palate Nurse  
Specialist

Telephone: 01 8921797 (or via hospital  
switchboard: 01 8784200 bleep 116)

Helen Tuffy  
Cleft Clinical Coordinator  
087 9888725  
Office 018784882

01 878 4200 Bleep 796

St Frances' Clinic: 01 8784293

9am – 5pm Monday – Friday

### Important to remember

Next Cleft Clinic Appointment

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Next Speech & Language Therapy  
Appointment

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The information in this leaflet is correct at time of print



## Secondary Palatal Surgery – Discharge Advice for Patients, Parents and Carers

### Cleft Team

Main Hospital Number

01 878 4200

Now that your child is going home after their operation, you may find this information leaflet helpful. Your child's surgery was performed either to improve speech or to close a hole (fistula) that may have developed in the palate. It may take several months before the success of the operation can be evaluated.

If you have any urgent concerns about your child when you go home, please contact the Plastic Surgery Registrar by ringing our hospital switchboard on 01 8784200.

For routine questions regarding your child's operation, please contact the Cleft Nurse Specialist or the Cleft and Craniofacial Services Manager through the hospital switch board.

## Food

Your child should eat "sloppy" food (yoghurt consistency) for 2 weeks after surgery and continue with a well balanced diet, avoiding sugary foods which may cause tooth decay.

A drink of water or milk should be given following food.



## Pain relief and Antibiotics



Pain relief such as ibuprofen (Nurofen) or paracetamol (Calpol) are suitable to use

when you go home. Antibiotics are not *routinely* prescribed on discharge home after this type of operation. However, some children may require antibiotics. If your child requires antibiotics, it is important that the full course is taken.

## Mouth Hygiene

Your child has a wound in their palate. Depending on the type of surgery performed, they may also have a wound on the inside of one or both cheeks, or at the very back of the throat. The stitches will dissolve in approximately 3 to 4 weeks. If there are wounds inside the cheeks, it may be uncomfortable for your child to open their mouth wide for several days. This should improve with time.

During this time, it is very important for your child to keep their mouth clean to stop build-up of food debris.

A glass of water after each meal and brushing their teeth correctly twice a day is important. A downward brushing motion is best.

## Antibiotics are not a substitute for good oral hygiene.

If you are worried that your child's wound has "come apart", please contact a member of the Plastics Team within normal working hours 8am-4pm weekdays. As long as your child is well, it is not an emergency and is usually managed by waiting to see how it settles. Small areas of wounds can break down but usually heal on their own. If your child becomes unwell at home with a high temperature and reluctance to eat/drink, please see medical advice from your GP or local hospital, and inform the cleft team.

## Sleep

Ideally your child should sleep on their side or propped up on a pillow to reduce the swelling at the back of the throat. It will also stop the build-up of saliva in their mouth.

## Activities

Most children get back to their normal routine very soon after their operation and should be allowed to play, attend crèche/school and go outdoors as usual a week or two following surgery.

Your child should not suck their fingers or thumb or place objects/toys into their mouth for 3 weeks after surgery. This will allow your child's wound to repair and heal.