

Cleft Lip Repair

Discharge Advice for Parents and Carers

Going Home

Now that your baby is going home after their cleft lip repair you may find this information leaflet helpful.

If you have any urgent concerns about your baby when you go home please contact the Plastic Surgery Registrar on duty for the cleft team by contacting your hospital switchboard. For routine questions regarding your baby's operation please contact your named Cleft Nurse Specialist through the hospitals' switch boards, CHI Temple Street 01 878 4200, CHI Crumlin 01 409 6100

Food and Comfort

Your baby should continue to use the bottle you used before your baby's operation. Feeding patterns and weaning can continue as normal. Depending on the type of surgery your baby has had the use of pacifiers or soothers may be limited for up to 3 weeks. Some babies may need to wear mittens for 1 to 3 weeks. Please discuss this with your child's surgeon or Nurse Specialist.



Pain Relief/Antibiotics

Pain relief such as ibuprofen (Nurofen) or paracetamol (Calpol) are suitable to use when you go home. Antibiotics are not routinely given after this type of operation. However, some children may require antibiotics. If your baby requires antibiotics it is important that the full course is taken.

Lip Wound

Your baby has a wound on their upper lip which contains tiny stitches. The stitches used on the surface are dissolvable and will not cause harm if swallowed. There may also be some glue over their lip wound. This glue begins to peel off after a number of days. The team will confirm with you the type of stitches/glue that have been used before you go home along with how to care for the wound.

It is important that no food debris or mucus is allowed to build up around your baby's wound area. It can be cleaned, if needed, by gently washing and patting it with a soft towel. Your baby may have had a repair of their hard palate, vomer flap, also. It is important to offer some cool boiled water to drink at intervals during the day to keep stitches in this area clean.

Later Care of the Lip Wound

Daily massage, starting 3 weeks after surgery, may help to make your baby's lip scar soft and supple. If your baby tolerates it you can use Vaseline to massage along the scar line with a firm rubbing action. Gently build up massage to 2-3 times a day for 3-6 months or as advised by your surgeon.

It is not unusual for a new scar to become red, hard to the touch or short looking when it is healing. It can take 12-18 months to fully mature and lighten in colour.

Activities

Most babies return to their routine very soon after their operation. Your baby should be allowed to play as normal. Do not allow your baby to put pointed objects such as keys, hard edges of baby books or straws into their mouth for 3 weeks. If your baby attends a crèche or nursery they can return about 2 weeks after their operation.



If you have any concerns about bleeding or wound healing contact your cleft team for advice or the on duty Plastic Surgery Registrar for out-of-hours service. CHI Temple Street 01 8784200 CHI Crumlin 01 4096100

Follow Up Appointments

Your baby's operation may be one of a number of operations needed to help their appearance. It is important that your baby continues to be reviewed by the cleft team. This will allow the team to pick up on any problems that may develop and to plan any further operations that may be needed.

It is important that your baby attends all their appointments. If you are unable to attend your child's appointment please contact your cleft team secretary or administrator/co-ordinator through the hospital switchboards

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Important to Remember

Next Cleft Clinic Appointment _____

Next Speech and Language Therapy Appointment _____

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The information in this leaflet is correct at time of print