

Care of Your Child After Cleft Palate Repair



Your child recently had surgery on their palate. As your child recovers, take these steps to help them heal.

How do I feed my child after surgery?

- Use the same bottle and nipple or cup as you did before surgery.
- Give your child food every 3 to 4 hours during the day.
- Count wet diapers. Your child should be making about six wet diapers in 24 hours.
- Feed only liquids, purees or very mushy foods for 2 to 3 weeks after the palate repair. Examples are yogurt, blended soup, baby food, mashed potatoes.
- After 2 to 3 weeks, your child can start eating soft foods. Examples are soft boiled noodles, soft bread, or mashed beans. Give water after food to rinse out the mouth.
- DO NOT give your child any hard food, such as cookies, chips, popcorn, or pretzels.
- Use utensils with care. Avoid forks, chopsticks and straws. You must hold the utensil for your child.

Does my child need medicine after surgery?

- Your child may need medication after surgery. If the doctor prescribes pain medicine or antibiotics, give your child the medicine as instructed.
- Tell the doctor if your child is taking other medicine, including over-the-counter medicine.

Are there any activity or sleep restrictions after surgery?

- There are no sleep restrictions after surgery. Your child may sleep the same way they sleep at home. Some children do not sleep as well as they did before the surgery. This may last for 1 to 2 weeks after surgery.
- There are no activity restrictions, and your child may do the same things they liked to do before surgery.
- Bathe your child the same way you did before surgery.

What should I expect after cleft palate repair?

- After surgery, it is normal to see white stitches or white areas on the palate. A little blood from the nose or mouth is also common for several days.
- DO NOT use a bulb syringe to clean your child's nose.
- DO NOT place anything hard in the mouth, like straws, forks, chopsticks or hard toys.
- Arm restraints may be given to you after surgery. They are used to keep your child from harming the surgery site. It is important to follow your doctor's instructions on how to use the arm restraints.

When should I call the doctor or nurse?

Call the doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns. Call the doctor or nurse immediately:

- If there is new bleeding or bleeding that does not stop
- If your child has a fever over 101.5° F (38.6° C)
- Is not eating or drinking
- Is throwing up

Who do I call if I need help?

- Monday through Friday call (323) 361- 4540 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and leave a message on the clinic nurse line.
- On evenings or weekends call (323) 660- 2450 and ask for the plastic surgeon on call.

Do I need to make any follow-up appointments?

Your child may need several follow-up appointments. Please call and schedule the following appointments as needed:

Clinic/Doctor	When?	Phone number
Plastic Surgery	Ask for an appointment about 2 weeks after surgery.	(323) 361-2154
Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) If your child had ear tubes placed during surgery, they need to be seen by an ENT doctor after surgery.	Ask for an appointment about 4 weeks after surgery.	(323) 361-2145