



Home → Health Topics → Cleft Lip and Palate

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/cleftlipandpalate.html>

## Cleft Lip and Palate

Cleft lip and cleft palate are birth defects [<https://medlineplus.gov/birthdefects.html>] that occur when a baby's lip or mouth do not form properly. They happen early during pregnancy. A baby can have a cleft lip, a cleft palate, or both.

A cleft lip happens if the tissue that makes up the lip does not join completely before birth. This causes an opening in the upper lip. The opening can be a small slit or a large opening that goes through the lip into the nose. It can be on one or both sides of the lip or, rarely, in the middle of the lip.

Children with a cleft lip also can have a cleft palate. The roof of the mouth is called the "palate." With a cleft palate, the tissue that makes up the roof of the mouth does not join correctly. Babies may have both the front and back parts of the palate open, or they may have only one part open.

Children with a cleft lip or a cleft palate often have problems with feeding and talking. They also might have ear infections, hearing loss, and problems with their teeth.

Often, surgery can close the lip and palate. Cleft lip surgery is usually done before age 12 months, and cleft palate surgery is done before 18 months. Many children have other complications. They may need additional surgeries, dental and orthodontic care, and speech therapy as they get older. With treatment, most children with clefts do well and lead a healthy life.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

### Start Here

- Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cleft-palate/symptoms-causes/syc-20370985?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/cleft-palate/symptoms-causes/syc-20370985?p=1>]
- Cleft Lip/Cleft Palate [<https://www.cdc.gov/birth-defects/about/cleft-lip-cleft-palate.html>]  
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Orofacial Clefts (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/orofacial-clefts.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/orofacial-clefts.html>]
- What is Cleft Lip and/or Palate? [<https://acpacares.org/resource/what-is-cleft-lip-and-or-palate/>] (Cleft Palate Foundation)

### Treatments and Therapies

- Cleft Lip and Palate Surgery [[https://myoms.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Ebook\\_Cleft\\_Lip\\_Palate\\_Surgery\\_6-8-15.pdf](https://myoms.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Ebook_Cleft_Lip_Palate_Surgery_6-8-15.pdf)]  
(American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons) - PDF

### Living With

- Cleft Lip/Cleft Palate: Feeding Your Child [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/clefts-feeding.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/clefts-feeding.html>]

## Specifics

- 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome (DiGeorge Syndrome) (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/22q11-deletion.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/22q11-deletion.html>]
- Cleft Lip [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/cleft-lip.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/cleft-lip.html>]
- Cleft Palate [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/cleft-palate.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/cleft-palate.html>]
- Cleft Palate With Cleft Lip [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/cleft-palate-cleft-lip.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/cleft-palate-cleft-lip.html>]
- Learning about Velocardiofacial Syndrome [<https://www.genome.gov/Genetic-Disorders/Velocardiofacial-Syndrome>]  
 (National Human Genome Research Institute)

## Genetics

- 22q11.2 deletion syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/22q112-deletion-syndrome>]  
 (National Library of Medicine)
- Ankyloblepharon-ectodermal defects-cleft lip/palate syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/ankyloblepharon-ectodermal-defects-cleft-lip-palate-syndrome>]  
 (National Library of Medicine)
- Focal dermal hypoplasia: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/focal-dermal-hypoplasia>]  
 (National Library of Medicine)
- Opitz G/BBB syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/opitz-g-bbb-syndrome>]  
 (National Library of Medicine)
- Peters plus syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/peters-plus-syndrome>]  
 (National Library of Medicine)
- Popliteal pterygium syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/popliteal-pterygium-syndrome>]  
 (National Library of Medicine)
- RAPADILINO syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/rapadilino-syndrome>]  
 (National Library of Medicine)
- Roberts syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/roberts-syndrome>]  
 (National Library of Medicine)
- Van der Woude syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/van-der-woude-syndrome>]  
 (National Library of Medicine)

## Images

- Cleft lip repair - series [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100010\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100010_1.htm)] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [[https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp\\_presentations/100010\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100010_1.htm)]

## Videos and Tutorials

- Learn About Common Birth Defects [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gm5frkgWEWQ>]  
 (National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research)

## Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Cleft Lip [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Cleft+Lip%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  
 (National Institutes of Health)

## Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

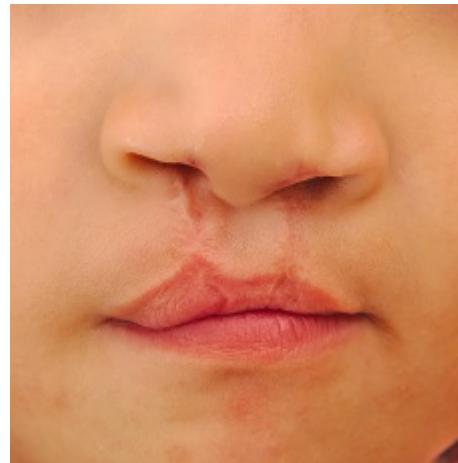
- Article: Quantitative and Qualitative Segmental Surface Growth in Infants with Unilateral Cleft... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40731861>]
- Article: Genetic modulation of IncPSMB1 confers non-syndromic cleft lip with or without... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40730884>]
- Article: Nationwide Spatial Patterns and Maternal and Birth-Related Factors Associated with Orofacial... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40724062>]
- Cleft Lip and Palate -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Cleft+Lip%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+OR+%22Cleft+Palate%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

## Find an Expert

- National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research [<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/>]   
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/espanol>]
- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov>] 

## Patient Handouts

- Cleft lip and palate [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001051.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001051.htm>]
- Cleft lip and palate repair [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002979.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002979.htm>]
- Cleft lip and palate repair - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000004.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000004.htm>]



## MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Aarskog syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001654.htm>]  
Cleft lip and palate [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001051.htm>]  
Cleft lip and palate repair [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002979.htm>]  
Cleft lip and palate repair - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000004.htm>]  
Cleft lip repair - series [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100010\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100010_1.htm)]

The primary NIH organization for research on *Cleft Lip and Palate* is the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research [<http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/>]

MedlinePlus links to health information from the National Institutes of Health and other federal government agencies. MedlinePlus also links to health information from non-government Web sites. See our [disclaimer](https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html>] about external links and our [quality guidelines](https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html>] .

The information on this site should not be used as a substitute for professional medical care or advice. Contact a health care provider if you have questions about your health.

[Learn how to cite this page](#)

National Library of Medicine 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health

Last updated June 1, 2017