

Palatoplasty (Cleft Palate Repair)

What is a palatoplasty?

Palatoplasty is a surgical procedure for a person with a cleft palate that will close the opening between the mouth and the nose.

What can I expect after my child's palatoplasty?

- After the surgery, your child will have **sutures** (stitches) on the roof of their mouth. These sutures may dissolve after a few days, but they may also take several weeks to go away completely.
- You can expect they will have fluid draining from their nose and mouth. This drainage will have some blood in it.
- It is important that your child does not put their hands or any hard objects into their mouth while their mouth is healing. Please follow these guidelines at least until your child's follow-up appointment:
 - Use their no-no elbow restraints for 2 weeks after surgery.
 - Do not let them use pacifiers or suck on their thumbs for 2 weeks.
 - Do not allow your child to play with toys that they can put into their mouth.

How should I feed my child after their palatoplasty?

The following precautions may need to be taken when feeding your child and continue until your follow up appointment with the surgeon:

- We recommend that you feed your child in an upright position, such as in a highchair.
- You may need to give your child smaller, more frequent feedings.
- Give your child water after their feeding to help clean the inside of their mouth.

- Give your child liquids by cup or by **gavage** (using a syringe with a soft tube in the corner of their mouth for feeding).
- Feed your child puree (blended food) and soft solid diet until their follow-up appointment.
 - Use the side of the spoon to give them purees and soft solids (such as bananas, avocados, steamed vegetables, or soft pasta).
- Avoid using sippy cups with long, hard spouts (where your child drinks from on the cup).
- Avoid hard, crunchy foods such as dry cereal, chips, and crackers.
- Don't let your child drink using a straw.
- Make sure your child is getting plenty of fluids so they don't get dehydrated.

When should I call the clinic?

Call the clinic if your child has any of these concerns:

- Bleeding from their incision (the surgical cut), particularly if they're bleeding bright red blood that does not stop
- If there is a blockage or anything that makes it hard for them to breathe
- Increased redness, swelling, or incision site getting wider.
- Pus-like draining
- Fever that is higher than 101.5° F for 24 hours
- They might be dehydrated (they should have at least 2-3 wet diapers per day)
- Uncontrolled pain
- Palate repair breakdown

What follow-up can I expect after my child's palatoplasty?

We will make an appointment with you for your child's return visit when you come in for their surgery. This appointment is usually around 2-3 weeks after your child's surgery.

Department of Pediatric Otolaryngology
Palatoplasty (Cleft Palate Repair)

What is the contact information?

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's surgery or recovery, please contact the clinic nurse by calling (734) 936-5730. You can also use this number for scheduling appointments.

- On weekends or after 5:00 PM, please call (734) 936-6267 and ask for the resident Otolaryngology doctor on call.

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