

# Pharyngoplasty Procedure Post-Operative Instructions

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## **What is a Pharyngoplasty or Pharyngeal Flap Procedure?**

Children with a repaired cleft palate may have a resulting condition referred to as "VPI" (Velopharyngeal Incompetence). This means that too much air escapes through the nose during speech, resulting in a nasal sounding speech. This occurs because the repaired soft palate is too short or does not move adequately.

A surgical operation called a Pharyngoplasty or Pharyngeal flap procedure improves the function of the soft palate. In this operation, some of the tissue from the palate and the back of the throat are repositioned to help close off the escape of air through the nose.

## **What changes to appearance can I expect after the surgery?**

After Pharyngoplasty, there will be sutures on the back of the child's throat (Pharynx) that extends to the roof of the mouth. You will not be able to see these from the outside. Your child may have some red drainage from his nose and mouth.

## **Will my child's speech be different after surgery?**

The purpose of the procedure is to improve the function of the palate in speech. Immediately after the operation, your child may not speak due to pain. After this operation, speech therapy is still needed to change speech habits, which have been used over time and will not automatically change because of the operation.

### **How will I take care of the wounds?**

The wounds inside your child's mouth require no special care. If your child complains about pain that gets worse over time instead of better, or if there is swelling or foul smelling drainage from the mouth, there may be a wound infection. Call the number below if see any of these signs or symptoms.

### **How will I manage my child's pain at home?**

Your child will have throat pain, may have a stiff neck and may be irritable due to hunger. By the time he is ready to go home from the hospital, we expect that his pain will be well-controlled on oral pain medications such as Tylenol or possibly oxycodone.

### **What will my child be able to eat?**

Your child need to be on a soft diet for about 1-2 weeks to protect the repair and because his throat will be sore. Examples of soft food are mashed potatoes, yogurt, and ice cream. The child needs to avoid placing hard objects (such as feeding utensils and popsicle sticks) in the mouth. Small, frequent snacks may be necessary for the first couple of days. Follow meals and snacks with water to clean the inside of the mouth.

### **What kind of activity can my child do after surgery?**

After surgery your child must not engage in rough activity.

### **When will my child return for a follow-up appointment?**

You will receive an appointment to return to the clinic about one week after discharge. If you are unable to keep the appointment, please call and reschedule.

## When should I call the doctor?

Call us if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Foul smelling drainage from the mouth
- Swelling
- Oral temperature over 101°F

## What is the contact information?

If you have any question, problems or concerns call the Pediatric Plastic Surgery clinic from 8-5:00pm Monday thru Friday, 734-763-8063. After 5:00pm or on the weekends if you have urgent issues call hospital paging at 734 936-4000 and ask the operator to page the Plastic Surgery Resident “on call”.

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