

POST OPERATIVE INFORMATION CLEFT LIP

Please call 202-444-9302 to schedule your post-operative appointment or if you have questions during office hours (8:30-5:00). Many patients are seen by our Nurse Practitioner, Christina Barra, during their first post-operative appointments if Dr. Baker is unavailable. You may also call her at 202-444-7962 if you have questions. She returns phone calls at the end of each clinic day. If you need a call sooner you can call Dr. Baker's assistant at 202-444-9302 and she can route your call accordingly.

After Hours Care:

Call 202-444-7243 and ask for the Plastic Surgery Resident on call.

Incision Care:

Your child's lip has been repaired with multiple layers of sutures and a layer of tissue glue. Any non-dissolvable sutures will be removed in 5-7 days. Do not put any ointment on the lip because it will dissolve the glue. Dr. Baker will tell you if and when ointment should be used. The tissue glue seals the wound to minimize crusting. If the tape over the sutures becomes loose, then use any medical tape to secure it until the post-op appointment. A small amount of bloody discharge from the sutured area is normal. Swelling is normal and will take months to completely resolve however the majority of the swelling will do down after several weeks. Your child may have a nostril stent placed and held in with a suture that Dr. Baker will remove in the office several weeks after surgery.

Diet:

You may resume normal feeding after cleft lip repair whether that is bottle or breast. The baby may also use a pacifier. Drooling may be seen for 1-2 weeks after surgery and it is normal. Offer liquids frequently to replace the lost fluids.

Restraints:

The baby should wear No-Nos for three weeks following surgery. Avoid letting anything hard or sharp near the sutured area. Use soft, stuffed toys that do not have button eyes. Teach other children not to put anything near the baby's mouth. Arm restraints may be removed during bath time, however close supervision is needed. Check your baby's arms for skin irritation throughout the day. Wearing the restraints over a long sleeved t-shirt may help prevent irritation.

Positioning:

Careful positioning is required so the baby does not rub his/her face and damage the sutured area. Sometimes elevating the head of the crib will help with swelling. When carrying your baby, make sure you do not bump the lip area or rub the face against your shoulder. Facing the baby away from you will help to prevent this.



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Medications:

Antibiotics are not routinely used after cleft lip repair. A narcotic pain medication will be given for pain. Irritability related to pain should improve in about 3 to 4 days however your baby may seem out of sorts for up to 2 weeks. Expect changes in your child's sleeping, eating, and playing habits. Your child may need extra attention during this time so do not be concerned about spoiling him/her.

Reasons to Call:

Temperature of 101.5 or above

Excessive drainage and/or bleeding

Increased redness

Increased swelling or abnormal swelling of one side compared to the other

Pain that is not tolerable after taking pain medication

Inability to urinate within 6 hours of leaving the hospital