



Cleft and Craniofacial Center - University of Rochester, Golisano Children's Hospital

Speech Surgery

Postoperative Patient Instructions

General

- For a week or two after surgery, your child may need extra attention and understanding. Don't worry about "spoiling" your child during this time. It is OK to respond to your child's need for extra holding and comforting.
- After surgery, your child will be sleepy for several hours. Your child will have an IV in place for giving fluids and pain medicines. You may see a little bloody drainage around the lips. You may see absorbable stitches inside the mouth or back of throat.

Feeding

- Your child's palate or throat is repaired with absorbable sutures, but the repair is delicate for several months after surgery.
- Day of surgery and 1 day after: clear liquids. Examples include water, apple juice, jello, popsicles (taken off the stick), or clear broth.
- Days 2-3: full liquids. Examples include milk, yogurt, cooked cereals, puddings, ice cream, creamed soups, thinned pureed foods
- Day 4-6 weeks: soft foods. Examples include mashed potatoes, cereal soaked in milk, cooked vegetables, finely ground meats, well cooked pasta, and bananas. Anything that can be easily squished between two fingers should be safe to eat.
- No straws, hard candy, toast, potato chips, bread sticks, pretzels, or any other sharp or hard foods for 6 weeks.

Breathing

- It is common for children to breathe deeply and snore for several weeks after surgery due to swelling in the throat. This typically resolves by 6 weeks after surgery. A cool humidifier or vaporizer in the bedroom may be helpful.

- However, some breathing patterns are abnormal. You should call the Plastic Surgery team if your child has periods of not breathing while sleeping, or has trouble breathing or periods of excess sleepiness during the day.

Activity

- Most children are ready to return to school in about a week. If you have concerns or questions about when your child can return, discuss with the Plastic Surgery team.
- No gym, sports, or heavily active play for 6 weeks after surgery, or until cleared by the Plastic Surgery team.

Speech Therapy

- Speech therapy should resume soon after surgery. Please check with our speech pathologist regarding timing of therapy.

Pain

- Your child may have some mild discomfort at home. If your child is irritable and not feeding well, he or she may be in pain. You should give acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and Ibuprofen as directed by your child's doctor. They are used to relieve mild to moderate pain and to reduce fever. It is important to take all medications exactly as prescribed.
- If your child's pain is not controlled on the above medications, please call our office to discuss this with the Plastic Surgery team. A stronger pain medication may be prescribed.
- Try to schedule a dose of pain medicine around bedtime, especially for the first few days at home. This will help your child sleep better.

Constipation

- Keep track of your child's bowel habits. He or she should return to previous bowel habits. If not, he or she may be constipated.
 - Call your child's pediatrician or the Plastic Surgery team if you think your child is constipated.

Skin and Wound Care

- The incision in the mouth is closed with absorbable sutures that will fall out over the next month or so.
- You should ask your child to rinse their mouth out with water after each meal to clean the area of food debris.
- It is OK to gently brush the teeth with a soft bristled toothbrush.

Follow-up

- Please make a clinic appointment for 2-3 weeks after surgery.

- A follow-up speech evaluation with our team speech pathologist should occur 4-6 months post-surgery.
- When to call your child's doctor or nurse
 - If your child:
 - has redness, increased swelling, drainage, or bleeding from the lip incision;
 - has separation of the suture line;
 - has a fever higher than 101.5°F degrees (taken under the arm);
 - has pain that doesn't get better after pain medicine is given;
 - is not drinking liquids or is vomiting;
 - has trouble breathing.
- If you have any questions or concerns, call the office at (585)-275-1000 and someone will assist you.