

## Cleft Lip Repair

Your baby's cleft lip (Picture 1) has been repaired. There are a few things to know about his or her care at home. Other than these special instructions, take care of your baby like any other baby the same age.

### Care of the Incision

The incision site (Picture 2) will have a little redness and swelling for about 2 weeks.

- Surgical glue is applied over the incision site. It will begin to look like a scab. It should fall off in about 2 weeks. Try not to get it wet.
- You might see blood clots in the nostrils; do not remove them for 2 weeks. You may accidentally pull out the stitches if you try to remove the clots.
- You do not need to use antibiotic ointment.
- Three to four weeks after surgery, your child's doctor may recommend massaging the lip with vitamin E oil. This helps to soften and flatten the scar.

### Feeding

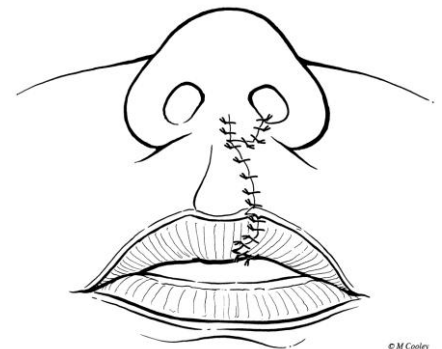
- Your baby should be able to drink and eat the same as before the surgery.
- The upper lip may be sore for several days, and the baby may be fussy at feeding time. It may help to give the prescribed pain medicine about an hour before feeding time.
- Your child can use a pacifier or soft spout sippy cup after the surgery.
- After each feeding, give your baby 1/2 ounce of water to rinse his mouth.

### Sleeping

While the incision is healing, your baby should sleep on his back to prevent rubbing the upper lip on the bed.



**Picture 1** Cleft lip.



**Picture 2** Cleft lip repair.

## **Arm Splints**

Arm splints are used to keep the baby from accidentally hurting the lip. Use them until your baby's checkup, for 3 weeks if possible. Refer to the Helping Hand: *Arm Restraints*, HH-II-16. Be sure you know how to put the restraints on before you go home. The nurse can show you how.

## **Pain**

Some pain is normal after going home. Follow your baby's doctor's advice for giving pain medicine.

## **Medication Safety Tips**

- The doctor will order pain medicine to use at home.
- Read the label each time before you give your child medicine.
- Give the exact amount of medicine as ordered by your doctor.
- If the medicine is a liquid, use a pediatric measuring device (available at the pharmacy) to measure the exact dose. Do not measure liquid medicines in kitchen spoons.
- Stay with your child until he or she has swallowed the dose of medicine.
- Store all medicine out of the reach of children.
- If your child or someone else takes too much of this medicine, first call the Central Ohio Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 (TTY 1-866-688-0088). They will tell you what to do.

## **When to Call the Doctor**

- Call your child's doctor or the Cleft Lip and Palate Center at (614) 722-6537 if:
  - Your child has fever over 101°F.
  - There is increased redness or swelling (or both) along the incision.
  - Yellow or white bumps (pimples) appear on the incision.
  - The incision opens.
  - The incision starts bleeding or gets hurt.
  - Your baby has problems with feeding.

## **Follow-Up Appointment**

Call the Cleft Lip and Palate Center at (614) 722-6537 for a follow-up appointment.

If you have any questions, be sure to call your doctor or call the Hospital Operator at (614) 722-2000 and ask for the surgeon on call for your doctor.