



Cleft Lip Repair

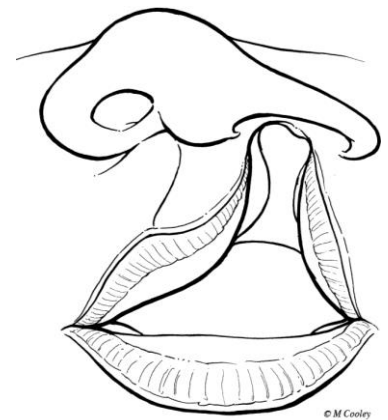
Your baby's cleft lip (Picture 1) has been repaired (Picture 2). There are a few things to know about his or her care at home. Other than these special instructions, take care of your baby like any other baby of the same age.

Care of the Incision

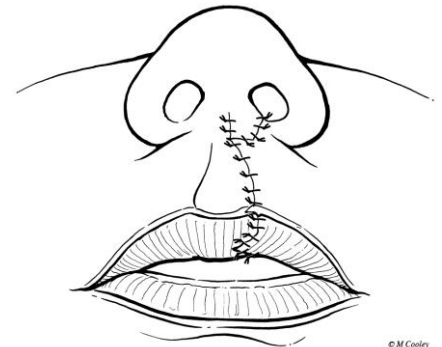
- The incision site will have a little redness and swelling for about 2 weeks. Surgical glue is applied over the incision. It will begin to look like a scab. It should fall off in about 2 weeks. Try not to get it wet.
- You might see blood clots in the nostrils; do not remove them for 2 weeks. You may accidentally pull out the stitches if you try to remove the clots.
- The stitches will dissolve while the incision is healing.
- You do not need to apply antibiotic ointment or any other creams.
- Three to four weeks after surgery, your child's doctor may recommend daily massage of the lip scar 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 your baby may be fussy at feeding time. It may help to give the prescribed pain medicine about an hour before feeding.
- Your child may 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 or her mouth.



Picture 1 Cleft lip



Picture 2 Cleft lip repair

Sleeping

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

Arm Splints

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

Pain

Some pain is normal after going home. Follow the 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.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your child's doctor or the Cleft Lip and Palate Center's helpline if your child has:

- fever over 101° F when taken rectally, axillary (under the arm) or in the ear
- increased redness or swelling (or both) along the incision
- appearance of yellow or white bumps (pimples) along the incision
- new openings or gaps in the incision
- bleeding or injury to the incision
- pain that does not go away when you give pain medicine
- trouble drinking or eating
- a dry diaper for 8 hours or more

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When to Call the Doctor, continued

If your child has taken too much medicine or the wrong medicine, first call the Central Ohio Poison Center at 800-222-1222, TTY 866-688-0088. They will tell you what to do.

The Cleft Lip and Palate Center helpline:

During regular business hours, 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday, call 614-722-6299.

After hours, on weekends, or holidays, call 614-722-2000. Ask to speak with the plastic surgeon on call.

Follow-Up Appointment

Your child will return to the Cleft Lip and Palate Center 2 to 3 weeks after surgery. For follow-up appointments at the Cleft Lip and Palate Center, call 614-722-6537.

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 child's doctor.