INFORMATION LEAFLETS FOR PARENTS / CARERS OF A CHILD
POST CLEFT LIP AND PALATE SURGERY

Immediate Post-Operative Period

- Your child will be nursed on intravenous fluids and usually is on an intravenous analgesic infusion.
- Other analgesia will also be given regularly in the first few days, this is important to encourage feeding.
- Your child may have a small tube in their nose, this is usually for no more than 24 hours.
- To protect against infection, we usually give two doses of antibiotics intravenously in the 24 hours post-operatively.

Cleft Lip

- Duoderm (a sticky gel dressing) will be applied to your child’s lip
- Reapply as necessary at home as shown, extra duoderm will be provided
- This will stay in place for a minimum of 2 weeks and up to 6 weeks as advised
- Sutures are absorbable, so no specific care is required.
- Mittens and gloves should be worn for 1 week post-surgery if a finger or thumb sucker.
- Keep nails short.

Cleft Lip and Anterior Palate

- Care of duoderm is as above
- Give your baby cooled boiled water to drink post feeding in the first week post-surgery to keep the wound clean.
- It can be normal for threads from the sutures to hang down your child’s lip. Unless they are causing a problem they should be left alone. If they are causing a problem contact the Plastics team or your GP.

Note: These sutures are made from an absorbable material and will not cause any harm if swallowed.

- Mitts/Gloves should be worn for 1 week post-surgery if a finger or thumb sucker.
- Keep nails short.
Secondary Palate, Soft Palate & Sub-Mucous Cleft

- Pain relief needs to be given regularly as required especially before feeding for the first week.
- Give your child cooled boiled water to drink following feeding for 1 week post-surgery to keep the wound clean.
- It can be normal for threads from the sutures to hang down inside or outside from your child’s palate. Unless they are causing a problem for the child they should be left alone. If they are causing a problem then contact the Plastics team or your GP.
- Liquidised diet only should be taken for the first week post-surgery where spoon feeding is already established.

Pharyngoplasty, Pharyngeal Flaps, Buccinator & Fistula Closure

- Liquidised diet only for the first 10 days post-surgery-refer to the diet sheet provided
- Normal diet to commence after that.
- Give your child cool water to drink following feeding for 1 week following surgery to keep the wound clean.
- Use a soft toothbrush to clean your child’s teeth.
- Analgesia should be given regularly as required.

Alveolar Bone Graft

- Soft non-chew diet for 1 week post-surgery.
- Elastoplast to stay on the child’s upper lip for 1 week-reapply as needed.
- Continue with antibiotics as prescribed
- Saline mouthwashes should be done hourly when awake, especially post feeding, this is to continue until reviewed in the clinic approximately 1 week later.
- Soft tooth brushing is permitted, avoid the surgery site for 3 days.
- Hip wound- reapply dressing as necessary. See wound care advice sheet.
- Encourage mobilising, but no contact sports for 4-6 weeks
- Pain relief as required.

Helpful Hints for Parents

- Book parent’s accommodation (01-4096520). Although one parent is welcome to stay by your child’s bed, a bed in the parent’s accommodation allows you to have time away from the ward for a rest/shower etc.
- Bring a sleeping bag and your own pillows
- Be sure to have your child’s favourite toys/comforters etc.
- You can bring your child’s own buggy, but there is limited space on the ward to allow storage of it.
- When you are discharged, if your child becomes unwell with a high temperature, is refusing to feed, is irritable or just generally unwell please contact your GP or the ward
Our Lady’s Children’s Hospital, Crumlin, Dublin 12

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Contact Details:

Phone St. Anne’s ward: 01 409 6521
Cleft Co-ordinator: 087 920 4932
Main Hospital Switchboard: 01 409 6100 (ask to be put through to the Plastics team)

Remember: Ask your nurse if you are unsure about anything about your child’s care.

Additional instructions

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