

Children's Services and Surgical Services

Pharyngoplasty – following discharge

By the time of discharge you will be familiar with your child's specific care. However, we hope the following information will be of help in supporting and advising you looking after your child once you all get home.

Feeding

By the time of discharge we would expect your child to be eating and drinking. After the operation your child's palate will be tender and liable to damage by hard or spiky foods. For this reason it is advised that you feed your child a soft and sloppy diet for three weeks post surgery. Your child may tolerate thicker soft foods than liquids, for example foods such as scrambled eggs, mashed potato, custard and jelly. A leaflet of acceptable foods will be given to you on discharge. Your child should be given around two to four teaspoons of cooled, boiled water after all medications and foods to cleanse the stitch line inside the mouth. This will continue for three weeks after the operation.

Do not give hard foods, for example, crisps, toast.

Chocolate can stick to the stitches so is best avoided.

Be careful when using cutlery and straws as these could damage the stitch line in your child's mouth.

If you have any concerns about your child's feeding feel free to contact your cleft nurse specialist or the Ward. (Contact numbers at the end of this document).

Pain

Your baby will be prescribed some medicines and you will need to have paracetamol and ibuprofen at home. You will be advised how much to give your baby before you leave the hospital. Paracetamol relieves pain. Ibuprofen relieves pain and reduces swelling. Codeine phosphate relieves pain but can cause constipation and drowsiness. It is advisable to try to reduce or wean your child off the codeine phosphate as soon as possible. You will be able to recognise if your child appears to be in pain. For the first few days at home give the pain medicines regularly.

If your child does not appear to be in pain, slowly reduce the frequency that they are given or remove one of the pain medicines. If you are concerned that the pain medicines are not effective please contact the ward.

Infection

Signs of infection (which is rare) include a red wound inside the mouth, raised temperature and loss of appetite. If your child presents these signs contact the ward directly. A course of antibiotics from your GP may be all that is required. The ward will inform your cleft surgeon.

Stitches

In order for the surgeons to carry out a pharyngoplasty it may be necessary to re-open the palate at the back. This will be put back together after the procedure. There will be dissolvable stitches inside the mouth (on the palate and at the back of the throat). These will start to dissolve about two weeks post surgery but can take up to six weeks to fully dissolve. Your child may swallow these stitches or spit them out - either way is harmless for your child.

Other important information

Your child may be a bit irritable for the next few days. They will settle down into their normal routine shortly.

Dummies are not allowed for three weeks after the surgery as they will prevent the palate healing.

Continue to keep hard toys and objects from damaging the palate for three weeks after surgery.

It is important to maintain oral hygiene after surgery. Use a mild mouthwash and a small headed toothbrush to clean your child's teeth taking care not to disrupt the stitch line in the mouth. You may want to assist your child doing this. It is normal for their breath to smell and this should disappear with good oral hygiene.

Your child can return to nursery or school after about two weeks but this varies from child to child. You may want to keep your child at home as it may be difficult to organise a soft and sloppy diet at school or nursery.

Grommets information

You must keep your child's ears dry for six weeks after the grommet insertion. When bathing and washing your child's hair please put some vaseline on some cotton wool and put into their ear. They are not allowed to go swimming for six weeks.

Outpatients follow-up

This is usually three months after your child's operation and in your local hospital where you usually see the Cleft Team. An appointment will be sent to you in the post. If this does not happen please contact the Cleft co-ordinator on 01223 596092.

Advice or support

If you require further information on any aspect of your child's care contact the Cleft lip and palate team who are available Monday-Friday 08:00-16:00.
Telephone: 01223 596272 (24hour answer machine) or ward D2 on 01223 217250.



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or

patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



Document history

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