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Cleft Palate Repair

Your child is scheduled for surgical repair of his or her cleft palate. This procedure may be done in one or two stages. The goal is to achieve the best structural and functional palate to allow for eating and speaking well. Below are post-operative instructions.

1. Your child may not use a bottle after surgery, as the nipple may rub directly on the repair site. Prior to the procedure, you and your child will have worked with a speech therapist to transition to feeding by cup and spoon. After surgery, your child must have only liquids and pureed foods for 2 weeks. Chunks of food can get stuck in the palate incisions.
2. Expect to stay 1-2 nights in the hospital after cleft palate repair. This is to allow your child to get back to eating and drinking well and to make sure your child has adequate pain control. Your child will be prescribed liquid pain medication for use after the procedure.
3. You will be given liquid antibiotics for your child to take after surgery.
4. After surgery, your child will have velcro arm splints (“no-nos”) that do not allow your child to bend the elbows. This prevents your child from placing fingers or other objects in the mouth, which can injure the repair site. These can be easily removed when you are holding your child, but should be in place at all other times during the first two weeks after surgery.
5. Call the office for fever > 101.5, increase in pain, increase in bloody drainage, difficulty eating or drinking, or any other concerns.
6. Follow-up with your surgeon 2-4 weeks after surgery. You will continue to follow with the surgeon and the Cleft Palate Team.