

# CHAD PURNELL M.D.

CRANIOFACIAL AND PLASTIC SURGERY

## Pre-and postoperative care instructions Cleft Lip Repair

### Before the Operation:

- After the operation we prefer that your child stops using a pacifier. It is often helpful to try to wean your child from a pacifier a few weeks before surgery.
- If you are taping your child's lip or using DynaCleft, please STOP using this 1 week before surgery.
- Follow the instructions given to you by our scheduler regarding eating and drinking. Try as much as possible to show up early. If you don't receive a call the day before surgery, call our hospital before 4:00 PM at 773-622-5400 to check on your instructions.

**Hospital Stay:** Usually, hospital stay after a cleft lip repair is 1 night for pain control and to make sure your child is drinking enough to maintain hydration. Some children that live close to the hospital may go home the same day as surgery as long as they are drinking. On rare occasions, children may need to stay an extra day if they are not drinking.

### After the Operation:

- Incision care: For the first 2 weeks, apply bacitracin ointment to the incision 3-4 times daily, enough to keep the incision from drying out. If crusts form, they can be gently removed with a wet Q-tip cotton swab with dilute hydrogen peroxide. You may wash the incision with soap and water during bathing as normal. If your child has nasal stents in place, these are held in with a stitch that will be cut at the first postoperative appointment. If these pop out, it is ok to simply place them back into the nostrils. These help to maintain the shape of the nose after surgery. After 4 weeks you may begin gentle scar treatments. (see separate instructions for these [HERE](#))
- Pain Control: For the first 2-3 days, it is usually easier to **schedule** non-opioid pain medications rather than waiting to see if your child needs them. **It is NOT necessary to wake your child up for a scheduled dose**, just give their next dose when they wake up.
  - If your child is younger than 6 months, they can take acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 6 hours.
  - If your child is greater than 6 months of age, they can take acetaminophen every 6 hours and ibuprofen (Motrin) every 6 hours, so your child will get a medication every 3 hours.
  - The vast majority of children do not require opioid pain medications such as oxycodone after cleft lip repair.

- Diet: Your child can return to their normal diet immediately after lip repair. This includes using a bottle as long as it has a soft nipple. Please avoid pacifiers if possible after surgery.
- Activity: Your child can return to normal activities after surgery. They should not put fingers or any hard or pointy toys near their mouths after surgery for 2 weeks or until they are seen in the office. **Your child does not need to wear arm restraints (No-Nos)** after surgery.
- Bathing: You may bathe your child normally with soap and water, including the incision. This can be done as early as the day after the operation.
- Follow-up appointments: Children are typically seen 2-4 weeks after the operation

### Things to let us know about:

- **Call the Office if:**
- Your child develops a temperature of **over 101 degrees** Fahrenheit (38.3 degrees Celsius) – it is not necessary to check temperatures after surgery unless you feel like something is wrong.
- Your child has **increasing redness, pain, weeping fluid, or swelling** at their surgical site. Swelling is normal for the first few days after surgery, but if swelling returns we would like to know.
- **Your child is not drinking fluids** and is not making as many wet or dirty diapers as usual.
- **If you have any concerns or questions**, contact us. We are used to receiving questions from parents and can help you decide if something is normal or abnormal after surgery.

### Contact Information:

#### IF YOU ARE SEEN AT SHRINERS HOSPITALS FOR CHILDREN:

- Main hospital: 773-622-5400
- Inpatient Unit: 773-385-5590
- Nurse practitioners: Marisa Foss, CNP: 773-385-5597, mfoss@shrinenet.org (Tues-Fri) Patty Engebretson, CNP: 773-385-5595, pengebretson@shrinenet.org (Mon, Tues, Thurs)
- Outpatient clinic nurses: Jill McGuigan, RN and Sandy Ritt, RN: 773-385-5503
- Care coordination: Tina Magnole, LCSW: 773-385-5826 and Krista Bauman, LSW: 773-385-5560
- EMERGENCIES: 911

#### IF YOU ARE SEEN AT UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-CHICAGO:

- Main Hospital: 312-996-7546
- Outpatient nurses: Alma Moya, RN MEd 312-996-2512 Linda Duffy 312-996-4119
- Appointment Scheduling: 312-996-7546
- Surgery scheduling: 312-996-9313
- EMERGENCIES: 911