

CLEFT PALATE TREATMENT TIMELINE

This is a time line for treatment of the child born with a cleft palate. This is a generalized plan of treatment. Each child is individually evaluated and a care plan is then formulated for that child's treatment.

1 MONTH

This is your first visit to see the Plastic Surgeon. Your baby will be weighed to be sure he/she is gaining weight appropriately. A history will be taken as well as pictures. The Plastic Surgeon will discuss with you the best treatment plan for your baby.

6 MONTHS

This is the time to introduce your baby to a cup. The baby needs to be drinking from a cup (without a lid or with a very shallow spout) by the time the palate is scheduled to be repaired. The surgery requires suturing of the soft tissue of the palate (**palatoplasty**), and it is important that this area not be irritated by the placing of items in the mouth. The baby will **NOT** be allowed to have a pacifier at this time. They will need to wear arm restraints to keep them from putting anything in their mouths.

9 MONTHS

The cleft palate is repaired. Your baby may need ventilation tubes placed at the time of palate repair. This will be determined by the ENT surgeon. The baby will stay 1-2 nights in the hospital to be sure the baby is taking fluids adequately.

3 YEARS –4 YEARS

When your child begins to speak in sentences, a speech evaluation by a speech pathologist is recommended. Speech therapy and/or surgery may be recommended at this time.

If surgery for speech is recommended, a **pharyngeal flap** will be done by the Plastic Surgeon. The child will be in the hospital until they are drinking well (2-4 days.) A soft diet is recommended for up to 2 weeks after the pharyngeal flap surgery is performed. Speech therapy followed up will be necessary after the surgery.

11 YEARS – 14 YEARS

As the child grows their face changes. If speech becomes a problem after the adenoid pad shrink, a pharyngeal flap may be needed. The length of hospital stay depends on what surgery is performed.

12 YEARS – 16 YEARS

Orthodontics (braces) are started about this time by the pediatric dentist or orthodontist.

15 YEARS – 20 YEARS

This is the time for finishing surgeries. There are several procedures that should not be done until growth is completed (girls 15-17 years of age, boys 18-21 years of age). These surgeries include jaw surgery to bring the upper jaw forward and/or the lower jaw back, cheekbone implants to build up the midface. If speech becomes a problem after the adenoid pad shrunk, a pharyngeal flap may be needed. The length of hospital stay depends on what surgery is performed.

It is important to maintain quality health care for your child. Your Plastic Surgeon can refer you to the appropriate health care providers. Remember to keep appointments and to follow instructions given by your health care provider to achieve the best possible outcome for you and your child!

The Plastic Surgery Office has provided the information. If you need additional information, please call 636-7181.