



# Family Education Sheet



## Home Care Instructions after Lip Adhesion or Cleft Lip Repair (for Patients of Dr. Meara)

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This sheet gives information on caring for your child after he or she has had a cleft lip operation.

### ***Skin Care***

- The incision is protected by a glue-like material called Dermabond<sup>®</sup>. Do not wash right over this area. No care of the incision is needed. You may clean the nasal edge gently with cotton swab and water if there is crusting. You may loosen any crusts in the nose with saline nose drops. All sutures and the Dermabond<sup>®</sup> will dissolve on their own.

### ***Nutrition***

- Give your child his or her usual diet at home. Feed your child with a special cleft lip nipple (Haberman feeder). Use this feeder for 2 weeks, and then you can return to any nipple/bottle. A silicone nipple will be gentle on the lip.
- Do not put pressure on the lip stitches with the nipple or feeder.
- If you are breastfeeding, your child may breastfeed 7 days after the surgery. The "football hold" may be most comfortable for the baby.
- You can use a soft-tip spoon for feeding, avoiding any hard/crunchy foods.
- Sometimes your child's nose may get stuffy. This will make it difficult for your child to eat. Clear the nose with saline nose drops, available in any drug store. If the nose drops don't clear your child's nose, use a nasal aspirator or bulb syringe. This must be done very gently. See Family Information Sheet: [Using a Bulb Suction Aspirator with Your Baby](#).
- See Family Information Sheet: [Preparing your Child for a Cleft Palate Repair](#) for more information to help you prepare for the palate surgery (if needed).

### ***Activity***

- Your child can return to regular activity, making sure the lip can not be injured. Sometimes your surgeon will want your child to wear protective sleeves to keep his/her fingers out of the mouth.
- Do not give your child a pacifier for 6 weeks.
- You can bathe your child in the tub. The lip can get wet, but do not wash the area.

### ***Pain***

- Your child may have some mild discomfort at home. If your infant is irritable and not feeding well, he or she may be in pain. Give acetaminophen (Tylenol<sup>®</sup>), as directed by your child's doctor. Acetaminophen comes as a tablet, caplet, and liquid. It is used to relieve mild to moderate pain and to reduce fever. It is very important to take acetaminophen exactly as directed by your doctor. Follow the directions on the package and ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand. Do not take more or less of it than prescribed by your doctor. Do not take it any more often than prescribed by your doctor.

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- If your child has more than mild discomfort, the doctor may prescribe medicine to help ease the pain. Give pain medicine as prescribed and instructed by your doctor and nurse.
- Try to schedule a dose of pain medicine around bedtime, especially for the first few days at home. This will help your child sleep better.

***Follow-up***

Please call Dr. Meara's office upon discharge for a follow-up appointment in 10-14 days.

***When to Call Your Child's Doctor or Nurse***

Call if your child:

- has redness, increased swelling, or drainage or bleeding from the lip incision;
- has a fever higher than 100.5°F degrees (taken under the arm);
- has pain that doesn't get better after pain medicine is given;
- is not drinking liquids;
- is vomiting; or
- has trouble breathing.

Call if you have any questions or concerns.

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A ***Spanish*** version of this is available from your provider  
Send comments or questions to: ***Familyed***@childrens.harvard.edu

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