

## Views on frequently asked questions: -

### **What is Cleft Lip and/or Cleft Palate?**

Cleft lip and/or Cleft palate are openings or splits in the upper lip, the roof of the mouth (palate) or both. They result when developing facial structures in an unborn baby don't close completely. They are the most common birth defects. A Cleft lip may be just a small n the lip. It may also be a complete split in the lip that goes all the way to the base of the nose. A Cleft palate can be on one or both sides of the roof of the mouth. It may go full length of the palate.



**CLEFT LIP**



**CLEFT PALATE**

### **How does it occur?**

Cleft lip and/or palate occur when tissues in the baby's face and the fusion never takes place or occurs only partially, leaving an opening (cleft). between the sixth and tenth weeks of foetal life.

### **What problems are associated with Cleft lip and/or palate?**

Eating difficulties, Ear infections, Speech problems, Dental problems, social problems and Challenges of coping with a medical condition.

### **How to prevent?**

Consider genetic counselling : If you have a family history of Cleft lip and palate, tell your doctor before you become pregnant.

Don't use tobacco or alcohol during pregnancy.

Intake of adequate nutritional supplements such as riboflavin and folic acid have shown to reduce the incidence of cleft lip and/or palate.

### **What is the treatment for Cleft lip and/or Cleft palate?**

A Cleft lip and/or palate requires surgical correction. A series of surgeries can restore normal function, improve breathing, stabilize and realign the teeth and jaw and achieve a more normal appearance with minimal scarring to look well, eat well and speak well.

## **When to see a doctor?**

The defect is usually visible at birth and to be attended by your doctor who may start coordinating alternative feeding care at that time.

## **What are the tests available?**

Ultrasound around 18th week of pregnancy can detect Cleft lip and/or palate before birth.

## **Who treats Children with Cleft lip and/or palate at JSS dental college and hospital?**

Members of a cleft lip and/or palate team include :

Pediatrician, Oral and maxillofacial surgeon, Otolaryngologist, Paediatric dentist, Orthodontist, Prosthodontist, Speech therapist, Psychologist and a Geneticist.

## **Dental care for Children with Cleft lip and/or palate?**

Children with Cleft lip and/or palate may have special problems related to missing, malformed or malpositioned teeth that require close monitoring. Early dental care requires proper cleaning and good nutrition. Pediatric dentist care for treating decayed tooth, fluoride treatment and appliances is required. Orthodontist care to assess facial growth, jaw development and for aligning teeth is required. Prosthodontist care for giving dental bridge, appliances is also required.

## **Surgical treatment?**

Surgery to correct Cleft lip and/or palate is based on your child's particular situation. It is done by trained surgeons for cleft care.

Cleft lip repair : between 2 and 3 months of age. Cleft palate repair : between 12 and 18 months of age.

The goal of lip surgery is to fix the separation of the lip. The goal of palate surgery is to fix the roof of the mouth so that your child can eat and learn to talk normally. Sometimes, a second operation is needed. Follow up surgeries : between age 2 and late teen years.

Cleft lip and/or palate surgery takes place in a hospital as a inpatient and the duration of stay may be 3-5 days. Many different surgical techniques and procedures are used to repair the defect, reconstruct the affected areas and prevent or treat related complications.

Surgery can result in significant improvement in your child's appearance, ability to eat, breathe and talk and also make the affected child become near normal to live a healthy social life.

## **Care after Cleft lip and/or palate surgery?**

The child will have stitches wherever the cleft defect was repaired and the stitches will either dissolve on their own or will be removed in approximately five to seven days. Special instructions regarding feeding and medication will be given.

**Diet after surgery?**

Do not allow breastfeeding for cleft lip repaired kid for a period of week after surgery. Allow bottle feedings or cup feedings after surgery for cleft palate kid. The child is placed on a soft diet for 7 to 10 days after surgery.

**Can routine activities be continued after surgery?**

Your child can walk or play after surgery. Avoid playing with mouth toys for 1 or 2 weeks after surgery. Follow up with your child's surgeon and the cleft team is very important.

**Additional treatment for Cleft lip and/or palate patients?**

Additional treatment may include :

Speech therapy to correct difficulty with speaking and psychological therapy to help a child cope with the stress of repeated medical procedures.

**What is the outlook for Children with Cleft lip and/or Cleft palate?**

Although treatment for a Cleft lip and/or palate may extend over several years and require few surgeries depending upon the involvement, most children affected by this condition can achieve normal appearance, speech and eating. The health care team works together to develop a plan of care to meet the individual needs of each patient. Treatment usually begins in infancy and often continues through early adulthood.

**COMPILED BY :**

Dr.Saikrishna.D, Dr.Sujeeth Shetty, Dr.Ramya.S and Dr. B Nandlal.

**For further assistance** : Visit JSS Dental College and Hospital, Cleft Lip and Palate

Multidisciplinary Outpatient Clinic services are available as a team on Fridays 11.00 am to 1.00 pm besides all working days.

**Contact No.:-** 0821-2548349 / 50 Extension no. 216