

Cleft Lip and Palate

A Treatment Overview

Cleft Lip and Palate Check List

You may find it helpful to record your child's procedures using this sheet.

Repair Cleft Lip (3 months old)

Repair Palate (9-12 months old)

Ear Tubes (9-12 months old)

Feeding and Speech (Birth-8 years old)

Surgery Revisions

Palatal Expansion/Bone Graft (7-9 years old)

Orthodontics (12-18 years old)

Dental Care

Medical Care

Other

Alaska Native Medical Center contact information:

Dental Clinic (907) 729-2000
Audiology Clinic (907) 729-1409
ENT Clinic (907) 729-1400
Pediatric Clinic (907) 729-1000

National Resources:

State of Alaska, DHSS, DPH, WCFH
3601 C Street, Suite 322
Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone: (907) 269-3430
Fax: (907) 269-3432

Cleft Palate Foundation
Phone: 1 (800) 242-5338
Website: www.cleftline.org

Faces:

The National Craniofacial Association
Phone: 1 (800) 332-2373
Website: www.faces-cranio.org



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Cleft Lip and Palate

Your child has been diagnosed with a cleft of the lip and/or palate.

A cleft is an opening or gap that occurs when the tissues of the lip and/or roof of the mouth does not grow together early in pregnancy.

A child born with a cleft palate needs several different types of services such as speech therapy, surgery and dental care, including orthodontics.



These services need to be coordinated between providers over the course of many years.

The cleft palate team will evaluate your child regularly and form a short-term treatment plan to meet your child's current needs.

The following is a long-term timeline of what you can expect your child will need.

Surgery:

- Your child's lip will be repaired around **12 weeks of age**, but this may vary depending on your child's growth.
- The palate will be repaired at **1 year of age**. Ear tubes are placed during the repair of the lip or palate to remove ear fluid and prevent ear infection.
- A lip and possible nose revision may be done at **4-5 years of age**.
- A bone graft will be performed by an oral surgeon following palatal expansion with the orthodontist at **7-9 years of age**.
- A maxillary advancement, or moving the upper jaw forward, may be needed in the **later teenage years**.

Dental:

- Good dental hygiene is important for all children. Help your child develop good life-time habits by beginning at an **early age**.
- Routine dental check-ups, beginning at **6 months of age** are needed.
- Removal of a baby tooth in the cleft site may be necessary.
- Early orthodontic treatment to expand the palate will be needed between **7-9 years of age**. This will be followed by a bone graft performed by the oral surgeon.

- Comprehensive orthodontics will be needed when your child is **12-13 years of age**.
- Bridge work, implants or partial dentures will be needed following orthodontic treatment, if teeth are missing.



Speech:

- Your child may need speech therapy. Early intervention and stimulation may help prevent speech problems.
- The Infant Learning Program provides services for children ages **birth to 3 years**.
- Older children may be able to get speech therapy services through local schools.

Hearing:

- Children with cleft palates are at risk for frequent ear infections and hearing problems. An ear, nose and throat (ENT) physician will check for ear infections and place ear tubes to drain fluid from behind the eardrum.
- Hearing and middle ear function should be checked regularly by the audiologist.