



PALATAL RE-REPAIR/PHARYNGEAL FLAP SPHINCTOR PHARYNGOPLASTY POST-OPERATIVE PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS

Dr. Albert Woo

Feeding

- **Your child may not use a straw for 3 weeks after surgery.**

Give your child cool liquids every 1 to 2 hours to keep the mouth and palate moist. The more your child drinks, the better he or she will feel.

Day 1 after Surgery

- Give your child clear liquids for the first 2 days after the operation. Cool liquids are better as they help decrease swelling. Examples of clear liquids are water, apple juice, grape juice, Jell-O, Italian ice, popsicles (off the stick). Cranberry juice, clear broth, bouillon, cola, lemonade and tea without cream or milk.
- Avoid drinks that are too hot or too cold. Give drinks close to room temperature. Very hot or cold drinks may cause discomfort. Do not use ice cubes.
- Bleeding from the nose is common. The roof of the palate creates the floor of the nose. Avoid nose blowing and wipe with a soft towel or tissue. You may use saline drops to help keep the nose clear. Bleeding should stop within 24-48 hours.

Days 2 to 9

- Your child should eat six small meals each day.
- Give your child full liquids or blended foods from the 3rd to the 9th day after surgery. If you do not have a blender, mash the food very well by hand. Blended or mashed foods must be soft enough to be fed to your child with a spoon. Most foods can be included in this diet if they are blended or mashed. All meals should be followed with a water rinse to clean the stitches and palate.
- Liquids such as milk, juice and gravy may be used to make foods softer. Some examples of full liquids or blended or mashed foods are milkshakes, yogurt, scrambled eggs, pureed fruits, pureed vegetables. Strained oatmeal, farina, cream of wheat, mashed potatoes thinned with milk, gravy, or butter. Pureed or strained soups, melted sherbet and ice cream, thinned pudding, and custard.

Day 10 to 3 weeks

- Give your child soft, cut-up foods from the 10th day to 3 weeks after surgery. Examples of soft foods are cooked cereals, softened ready-to-eat cereals, French toast, crackers softened with milk or water, soft bread, dinner rolls, waffles, pancakes, muffins, cookies softened with milk or water. Cakes, doughnuts, pies, canned fruits, bananas, soft meats, fish, eggs, cheese, tuna. Mashed potatoes, rice, macaroni, spaghetti, soups, jams, jellies, honey, cooked vegetables, and plain yogurt.
- **Do not give any hard foods such as: chips, pretzels, breadsticks, crackers, hard candy, bagels, nuts, seeds, fresh fruits and dried fruits. They may damage the suture line.**

Breathing

- You can expect your child to be breathing deeply and snoring for several weeks after the operation. This typically resolves within 6 weeks after surgery. Changing position may help your child breathe more comfortably. A cool humidifier in the bedroom may also be helpful.
- Call your child's doctor if your child:
 - has periods of not breathing
 - has trouble sleeping
 - is very tired during the day.

Hygiene

- Your child should rinse his/her mouth three times a day for 10 days. The rinse can be plain water, salt water (1/2 teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of water) or mouthwash diluted with water.
- The sutures will dissolve in about 3-4 weeks. They do not need to be removed.
- If your child has nasal congestion that doesn't get better, use saline nose drops or spray. This will help dissolve the thick mucus. You can buy saline nose drops or spray without a prescription. If the nasal congestion does not go away, call your child's doctor.

Activity

- Once at home, your child may walk and play quietly. Your child should avoid yelling or screaming.
- Your child's doctor will tell you when your child can return to school or day care.
- He/she should avoid any rough activity for 4-6 weeks. This includes gym at school and contact sports.
- Your child's doctor will tell you when your child can return to gym and sports.
- Your child should not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds.

Pain

- Surgeries in the back of the throat (nasopharynx) are painful operations. Usually the pain significantly improves at about 2 days after surgery. Your child may have some mild discomfort at home. Your child may complain of pain in the back of the head, ears, neck, or throat for the first week after the operation. This is normal. A cool cloth or ice pack on the back of the neck may help. Pain can cause your child not to drink well.
- If your child is in pain, give acetaminophen-Tylenol or FEVERALL. Acetaminophen. 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.
- Your child's doctor or nurse will give you a prescription for a pain medicine. If the pain does not go away with acetaminophen, give the pain medicine as prescribed and instructed by your doctor and nurse.
- To help your child sleep better, try to give a dose of pain medicine around bedtime, especially for the first few days at home.
- Ibuprofen can be used as needed after one week. Ibuprofen comes as a liquid. It is used to relieve mild to moderate pain and to reduce fever. It is very important to take ibuprofen exactly as directed by your doctor or pharmacist. Follow the directions on the package and ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand. Do not give it any more often than prescribed by your doctor.

Constipation

- Keep track of your child's bowel habits. He/she should return to usual bowel habits. If not, he or she may be constipated.
- Call your child's doctor or nurse if your child seems constipated.

Emotional Recovery

- After surgery, your child may be tired or irritable. It is important that your child rest.
- Healing for each child is different. In time (usually about one month), your child will return to his or her usual activity level.

Follow-up

- You will need to return for a follow-up visit. Call the doctor's office to arrange this.
- Speech therapy can usually resume 4-6 weeks after the operation. Check with your surgeon at your follow-up visit.

When to Call Your Child's Doctor

Call if your child:

- has bleeding from the mouth;
- has trouble sleeping;
- has a fever higher than 101° F;
- has drainage from the mouth;
- has pain that doesn't go away after receiving pain medicine
- is not drinking liquids or is vomiting
- is irritable and cannot be comforted.
- If it is after hours or on the weekend and you need to speak to the doctor, please call 444-4000. Ask the operator to page the on-call Plastic Surgery Resident.