

- A Social worker/psychologist aims to support the family members by teaching them strategies to adjust to the child's needs and helps the child with cleft lip and /or palate to deal with social and emotional problems

8. What are the treatment options for cleft lip/or palate?

Surgery: This is the first step of treatment in order to correct the structural abnormalities.



Prosthesis: If there is a residual cleft even after the surgery of the oral structures, a prosthesis will be provided in order to improve the functions of the oral structures for feeding as well as articulation.



Speech therapy: It mainly focuses on improving the strength of the oral structures in order to perform both non- speech and speech tasks such as sucking, blowing and producing pressure sounds such as /pa/, /ba/, /ma/ and so on. This is usually accomplished by teaching various oromotor exercises as well as drill exercises to improve articulation.

9. Is cleft lip/ or palate preventable?

If the following precautions are undertaken, then the occurrence of cleft lip and/or palate can be prevented to some extent.

- If there is any history of cleft lip and/ or palate in a family, it is advisable to go for a genetic counseling



- Consumption of nutritious food at the time of pregnancy is very essential



- Avoid consumption of harmful substances such as alcohol or tobacco at the time or pregnancy



- Medications such as vitamin supplements, folic acid etc must be taken after doctor's consultation only



- Avoid accidents or falls during pregnancy

FOR FURTHER DETAILS AND INFORMATION CONTACT



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HOW TO PREVENT CLEFT LIP AND CLEFT PALATE????

Department of Prevention of Communication Disorders



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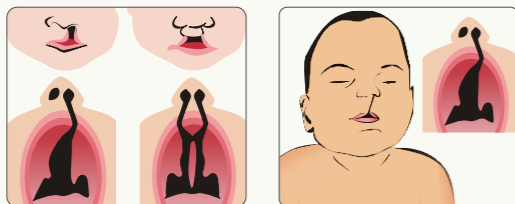
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1. What is cleft lip and cleft palate?

Cleft lip and cleft palate are facial and oral malformations that occur while the baby is developing inside the mother's womb. Cleft occurs when there is insufficient tissue in the mouth or lip area due to which the structures fail to join (seal) properly.



2. Can cleft lip / palate occur separately?

Yes! Cleft lip and/or palate can occur separately because the lip and the palate develop as individual structures. Thus, it is possible to have a cleft lip without a cleft palate, a cleft palate without a cleft lip, or both together.

3. At what age does it usually occur?

Since the onset of this problem is congenital, these structural defects usually occur during the embryonic development especially during the first trimester of pregnancy.



4. What are the possible causes of cleft lip and palate?

- Effects of drugs (anti seizure , anti cancer drugs)
- Genetic factors
- Malnutrition
- Exposure to viral infections, chemicals during pregnancy
- Poor intake of folic acid supplements during early pregnancy

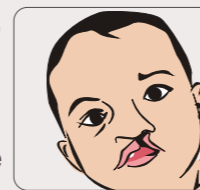
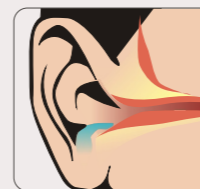
5. How can we diagnose cleft lip/ or palate?

A cleft lip and/or palate can be easily diagnosed during the early stages of pregnancy itself. A prenatal ultrasound can help determine if a cleft exists in the oral structure of the fetus. If not, it can be easily detected as soon as the child is born by looking at the deformity in the oral structures.



6. What are the problems associated with cleft lip/or

- Difficulty in feeding the child
- Difficulty in eating and swallowing
- Frequent ear discharge or ear infections
- Dental problems- often have missing, extra, malformed, or displaced teeth
- Delay in speech and language development
- Speech is unclear and consists of nasal air emissions (air escaping through nose while speaking)



7. Who are the team members involved in the treatment of children with cleft lip/or palate?

Since cleft lip and/or palate are associated with various oral health and medical problems, a team of medical and non medical specialists are involved in the rehabilitation of these children.

- A Plastic surgeon evaluates the deformities in the oral structures and performs the necessary surgical corrections during appropriate time periods (age)
- A Prosthodontist designs artificial teeth and dental appliances in order to improve the appearance and to meet functional requirements such as chewing and speaking
- An Orthodontist performs certain surgical procedures in order to straighten and reposition the dental structures (upper and lower gum and teeth)
- A Nurse coordinator constantly supervises the medical condition of the child
- An ENT specialist regularly assesses the child for signs of middle ear infections and provides appropriate medical treatment for the same
- An Audiologist assesses and monitors the hearing ability of the child by performing diagnostic tests and provides suitable management for the same
- A Speech-Language Pathologist does a detailed assessment of the oral structures and articulation of speech sounds and other associated problems such as feeding, chewing and swallowing difficulties and hence provides oromotor exercises as well as speech therapy to develop the strength of the oral structures for feeding and also improve the articulation of speech sounds respectively

