



Cleft Lip & Palate

What is cleft lip & palate?

In early pregnancy, different parts of a baby's face develop separately and then join together. If some parts do not join properly, the baby is born with a cleft. A cleft lip can range from a little notch to a complete gap in the upper lip, which can go up and into the nose. This can affect one side of the top lip or both sides. A cleft palate is a gap in the roof of the mouth. You can have a cleft lip, a cleft palate, or both.

How many people have a cleft lip & palate?

Around one in 700 babies are born with a cleft around the world. That's over 1,000 babies born with a cleft each year in the UK!

How is it treated?

Surgery is needed to close the gap left by the cleft. This will usually happen when the child is under a year old. Treatment may include further surgery when they are older to help with difficulties such as speech and growth of teeth. It may also include speech therapy, help with hearing and orthodontic work.

Will my child need speech therapy?

About 50% of children with a cleft palate will need some direct speech therapy. When your child is 2 years old, if necessary and appropriate, direct therapy can begin. This is usually at monthly intervals with the therapist, with lots of games for you to carry out with your child at home.

Useful Links

Cleft Lip & Palate Association (CLAPA):

<https://www.clapa.com/>

Birmingham Women and Children's Hospital Cleft Lip & Palate Services:

<https://bwc.nhs.uk/cleft-lip-and-palate/>

Max Appeal - supporting families affected by DiGeorge syndrome, VCFS and 22q11.2 deletion:

<http://www.maxappeal.org.uk/>