

Alveolar Cleft Bone Graft Post-Operative Instructions

What is an Alveolar Cleft Bone Graft?

The portion of the gum which contains teeth is called the alveolus. Permanent teeth, which are not visible to the naked eye, develop in the alveolus of the lower jaw (mandible) and upper jaw (maxilla). Children with clefts may not have enough bone in the alveolus to support the development of permanent teeth. An alveolar cleft bone graft (ACBG) is a surgical procedure where the surgeon takes bone from the hip or skull (cranium) and uses it to fill in the space in the alveolus where bone is missing due to the cleft. The placement of this bone graft allows for a firm base of support for permanent teeth or prosthetic devices if necessary.

What changes to appearance can I expect after the surgery?

After ACBG surgery, there will be stitches on the gum and just behind the front teeth. The stitches are white in appearance. Your child may have some red drainage from his nose and mouth. Your child's lips may be swollen. If the hip was used as a donor site for the graft, your child will have a very small tube or catheter attached to a pump that automatically infuses pain medication to the hip for about 3-5 days.

How will I take care of the wounds?

Avoid trauma to the gum area. Avoid brushing the gum area until advised by your doctor. Use a mild salt-water rinse after each meal.

The hip incision will have Steri-strips over it. Leave those in place. If the edges of these strips begin to curl up, you may trim them. After about 3 days, when the pain pump is empty, remove the tape and pull the catheter out gently. We strongly encourage your child to walk and do deep breathing exercises. This will decrease pain and promote healing.

How will I manage my child's pain at home?

We expect that by the time your child is ready to go home from the hospital they will not have much discomfort. There may be some pain in the hip if this was the donor site. The pain pump will greatly decrease the amount of pain at the hip. The doctor may also suggest pain relief medication if needed. Try Tylenol® alone first.

What will my child be able to eat?

- Right after surgery your child will eat a **very** soft diet that includes ice cream, applesauce and protein drinks.
- They may not eat anything harder than scrambled eggs for at least 3 weeks after surgery.
- They may not use a straw or bite into any foods with their front teeth.
- Take care to make sure that they drink enough liquids.
- Follow each meal with a mild salt-water rinse to help clean the inside of the mouth.

When will my child return for a follow-up appointment?

If you did not receive an appointment when your child is discharged, please call the office at the number listed below to schedule. We typically see children about one week after surgery. If you are unable to keep the appointment, please be sure to call and reschedule.

When should I call the doctor? Call us if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms which may indicate an infection:

- Bright redness in the gums and/or incision site
- Pus-like drainage
- Swelling
- Oral temperature over 100.5 degrees

What is the contact information?

If you have any question, problems or concerns call the Pediatric Plastic Surgery clinic from 8-5:00pm Monday thru Friday, 734-763-8063. After 5:00pm or on the weekends if you have urgent issues call hospital paging at 734 936-4000 and ask the operator to page the Plastic Surgery Resident “on call”.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Erin, Larowe
Reviewers: Carolyn, Walborn, RN, MS, CPNP

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#). Last Revised 08/2018