

Post-operative care instructions for parents of children with cleft lip surgery:

- *Place the child in semi-lateral position. (Sleeping in prone position is prohibited).
- *Bed rails should be kept raised and do not leave the child alone.
- *Use a cool mist humidifier.
- *Do not touch the surgical dressing; it will be removed by surgeon one day after the surgery.
- *After removal of the dressing by the doctor, apply Tetracycline ointment once every 8 hours (without massaging it), and continue this for up to two days after the removal of the sutures.
- *Until the sutures are removed, use splints (arm restraints).
- *The child should not eat anything until they are fully awake; after the child regains consciousness and is fully awake (approximately two hours after arrival to the ward), ask the nurse about the appropriate time to initiate feeding.
- *Children with isolated cleft lip who were previously breastfed may resume breastfeeding after surgery, as breastfeeding does not cause damage to the surgical site.
- *Pacifier use is prohibited for up to 20 days and for 20 days, feeding should be performed using a feeding bottle or soft, flexible silicone spoon in a semi-upright position. After 20 days, feeding may be resumed using a Haberman bottle.
- *Begin feeding with water and sugar water, then start milk after 24 hours. After each feeding, give the child some water to rinse the wound so that milk does not remain on the surgical site.
- *To prevent lung infection, perform respiratory physiotherapy to promote clearance of respiratory secretions. (bent your fingers in order to make a cupped hand shape and gently percuss over the ribs on the back to help the secretions come out). The child may be bathed on the third post-operative day; however, the surgical site should not be scrubbed. Use only baby shampoo.
- *Signs of infection include: redness, inflammation, swelling, purulent discharge from the surgical site and the fever above 38.5 c. If these occur, the child must be examined by the doctor.
- *The prescribed antibiotics should be taken as directed by the doctor.
- *Up to two weeks after suture removal, begin using the prescribed anti-scar ointment as directed by the treating doctor and before going outdoors, apply pediatric sunscreen.
- *Until one and a half months after surgery, gently massage the surgical site twice daily using a well-oiled index finger, moving from top to bottom. In unilateral cleft lip cases, the site may initially be slightly pulled upwards due to collagen formation; but typically, it returns to its normal position over a few months with a regular massage.

*According to the doctor's instructions, the patient should visit the treating doctor 7 to 10 days after surgery for suture removal.

Patient Education Department