

If you have any questions, queries, or require more information, please contact the cleft department:

Telephone: (01792) 703810

Monday to Friday

8.30 am to 4.30 pm

An out-of-hours answering machine is available

An on-call system is operated on weekends and bank holidays by the clinical nurse specialist

Ward M 01792 618891 is available 24/7 as an alternative contact number

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Advice Before and After a Cleft Palate Repair

The Welsh Centre for Cleft Lip and Palate

Morrison Hospital

Swansea

www.wales.nhs.uk/cleft-team

With thanks to the Cleft teams from Bristol and Nottingham who have helped us enhance our information leaflet.

This leaflet is designed to advise you about the care your baby will receive when they come into hospital for repair of their cleft palate and the care they will need following their surgery.

Admission

Your baby will be admitted to hospital on Wednesday and they will be seen by a paediatrician and anaesthetist and will have photographs taken. They will have their surgery on Thursday. Your baby will normally stay in hospital for three to four days. There is room for one parent to stay overnight on the ward.

Ward M — general information

Ward M is a 20 bedded surgical specialities ward. Children range in age from babies to teenagers.

There is a small parents kitchen with a fridge and microwave where you can make drinks/food.

Visiting:

Open visiting for parents. 2pm to 7pm for relatives.

Taking photos:

We appreciate that you may wish to take photos of your baby. We ask for your discretion when doing so and ask that you do not take photos of other children or staff on the ward without their permission.

Please do speak with the staff if you have any concerns or questions.

What to bring with you

- Comfortable clothes for your baby (e.g. front opening) and cool comfortable clothes for yourself
- Toiletries
- Baby milk
- Bottles and teats. The ward uses cold water sterilisation and these tanks are available on the ward.
- Bottle brush
- Favourite toy/comforter
- Nappies
- Medications

Feeding your baby before and after surgery

Prior to surgery feed your baby normally. The anaesthetist will advise you when to give your baby a last drink before surgery. This is calculated according to the time the baby is having surgery and will be different for each patient. This usually means missing out on one feed but it is important to have an empty stomach when having anaesthetic for surgery. Don't worry, an intravenous infusion is given inter-operatively to give fluids that have been missed.

How soon will I/we be able to see our baby after the operation?

As soon as your child has woken from the anaesthetic the ward staff nurse will take you to collect your child from the recovery room in theatre where they wake up.

Safety on discharge home

Keeping your baby safe and comfortable on their journey home is very important.

The operation on your baby has altered their airway (as has been explained to you during your stay) for this reason additional care needs to be taken whilst travelling with your baby over the next two weeks or so, following discharge home.

Please ensure that the your baby is securely placed in their car seat with their head resting in a neutral or sniffing position and not with their head rolled forward (this can block their airway post-surgery).

Please ensure that there is an adult sitting next to your baby whilst travelling so that their position can be adjusted if needed.

It can take several weeks for all the swelling from the operation to finally disappear therefore please take extra care during this time.

Follow up

You will receive a follow up call during the week following the operation from the cleft nurse specialist. You will then have a review appointment with a Cleft nurse specialist 4-8 weeks after their operation in Morriston.

How will I know if my baby is experiencing pain?

It can be difficult to judge when babies are in pain as they can cry for many reasons e.g. hunger.

Signs that your baby may be in pain are:

- Crying
- You may be unable to comfort them
- They stop feeding / refuse feeds
- They are unable to settle to sleep

Infection

An infection in your baby's palate will require prompt attention and a course of antibiotics may be required. The signs to look for are:

- high temperature and feeling unwell
- reluctance to feed
- vomiting and loose stools
- red, swollen looking wound
- Smell or visible discharge/pus from wound

If any of these signs are evident please ring us, we usually advise a trip to your GP, sometimes we request you return to hospital.

A few babies develop a hole in their palate called a fistula. This often closes by itself and does not cause any further problems, but do contact the Cleft Team if this happens and mention to the surgeon when you see them for a follow up appointment.

How soon can I feed my baby after surgery?

As soon as your baby is awake enough you will be encouraged to feed them. Nursing staff will be there to supervise and support you at this time.

There is no need to rush your baby they will feed when they are ready. For going home we like your baby to be taking approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of their normal feed in their normal time over a 24 hour period. If they have started solids, baby needs pureed diet for 2 weeks, soft diet 2 weeks and 4-6 weeks slowly back to normal diet.

Will they be able to breathe properly?

Babies over six months of age are starting to breath mostly through their mouth. Their airway has been made smaller by the operation and there will be some swelling from the operation. We elevate the top of the cot to help with reducing the swelling. Sometimes they can snore gently after surgery. This usually disappears after a few weeks.

Will they be able to use a soother/dummy?

Try to avoid if possible, however not if it makes the baby very upset. If the baby is very dependent, try to discontinue pre-op. It is better for the repair and dental health.

Will they be in pain?

They will have been given pain medicine whilst asleep. Sometimes they are a little disorientated when they wake up but this will settle. While in hospital they will be given Oromorph (morphine), if needed, and regular paracetamol and ibuprofen.

Your child needs to be free from having morphine for at least 12 hours before discharge home. You will need to continue to give regular paracetamol and Ibuprofen when at home.

Pain relief advice. How can I keep my baby comfortable?

By giving regular pain relief medicine as prescribed after the operation.

Give your baby regular paracetamol four times a day. Give ibuprofen three times a day. Ibuprofen should be given with/after milk as it can cause inflammation of the stomach lining. The combination of these two medicines should keep your child comfortable.

Please check that you understand the advice given before leaving hospital. If you are unsure please ask a member of staff.

For pain relief at home - please tick after giving each dose to remind you when you have given the medicine

Paracetamol – Please give regularly

	MORNING	MIDDAY	EVENING	NIGHT TIME
Day 1				
Day 2				
Day 3				
Day 4				
Day 5				

Ibuprofen – please give regularly

	MORNING	AFTER-NOON	NIGHT TIME
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			