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## Alveolar Bone Graft (ABG)



Y Ganolfan Gymraeg i  
**Wefus a Thafod Hollt**  
The Welsh Centre for  
**Cleft Lip & Palate**

Morriston Hospital, Swansea, SA6 6NL

<https://sbuhb.nhs.wales/hospitals/a-z-hospital-services/cleft-team/>

## Alveolar Bone Graft

**Alveolar** is just another word for the bone which supports your teeth.

**Bone** will go into your gum.

**Graft** is the name used when something is taken from one bit of the body and put into another. Bone from your hip will be put into your gum.

## Why do I need to have an ABG?

The bony part of your gum holds your teeth in the right place. Some children born with a cleft lip have a gap in the gum. An alveolar bone graft (ABG) helps keep the teeth in the right place. Carrying out an ABG involves bone being taken from your hip and being put into the gap in your upper jaw inside your gum.

## When will I have my operation?

Usually from the age of 8 years onwards depending on how your adult teeth are growing. The best time will be decided by the Surgeon and the Orthodontist. The Surgeon is the person who does your operation. The Orthodontist is the person who changes the position of the teeth using braces.

## What happens before the ABG?

For a few children, the upper jaw is narrow and needs to be made wider with a brace. Sometimes the gap in the gum is also made bigger to make room for the bone. The Orthodontist will use different kinds of braces to gently open the gap. It is important to keep your teeth clean using a small toothbrush with adult toothpaste. You should avoid sticky foods.

## Where will I have my operation?

You will have your operation in Morriston Hospital and you will stay on the children's ward.

## Can someone stay with me?

Of course, one of your parents/carer can stay with you throughout your stay.

## What should I bring with me?

You will need to bring your clothes including pyjamas, a wash bag, a soft toothbrush and toothpaste and maybe one or two of your favorite toys, books or magazines.



## Why can't I have anything to eat or drink before my operation?

It is important to have an empty tummy before your operation, otherwise you might be sick. One of the nurses will let you know when you can have your last food and drink.



## **Mouthwash**

You will be given Chlorhexidine antiseptic mouthwash to use for one week before surgery and two weeks after (instructions for use will be provided).

## **What happens on the day of the operation?**

An Anaesthetist will visit you. An Anaesthetist is a doctor who will give you medicine to make you sleep during operation. This is a special type of sleep, you won't feel anything or wake up until after the operation has finished.

## **Can someone come to the anaesthetic room with me?**

The anaesthetic room is where you will have the special medicine to make you drift off to your special sleep. One of your parents or carers will be with you when you go to sleep. You can tell the doctor what sort of things you want to dream about.

## **What is it like going to sleep for an operation?**

It won't take long for the medicine to make you feel sleepy. By the time you have told the anaesthetist what you want to dream about, you will have fallen asleep.

## **What happens when I have the operation?**

During the operation the surgeon will take a small amount of bone from inside the hip and use this to fill the gap in the bone of your upper jaw. The gum is carefully stitched over the bone graft to help it heal. These stitches dissolve on their own.

## **How long will I be asleep?**

You will be asleep until your operation is finished. This is different for everyone but usually takes around two hours. When the operation is finished you will wake up in the recovery room. You will probably still feel very sleepy and most people don't even remember this bit. Your parents or carers will be there when you are waking up.

## **What will I look like?**

Your face may be a little swollen. You will have a small dressing on your hip. There may be some orange colouring on your hip and leg which was used to clean your skin. You will have some stitches in your mouth and your hip. They will dissolve so you don't need to have them taken out.

## **Will it hurt? What will it feel like?**

You will be given medicine to help stop your mouth and hip from feeling sore. If it does hurt, tell a nurse who will be able to help. Sometimes people feel sick; if you do, tell your nurse who will give you some medicine to make you feel better. Your hip may feel sore when you first walk but this will get better. It is very important to take all your medicine regularly, as this will help you to get better quickly.

## When can I eat and drink?

When you feel well enough, you will be able to drink plenty and eat. After eating you must rinse your mouth out to keep it clean.

## What kinds of food can I eat?

- Puree diet for the first 2 weeks.
- Soft diet for the next 2 weeks.
- Over the final 2 weeks you can build up to your normal diet.
- Most common foods are suitable such as cooked vegetables, soft fruit, pasta, rice, tinned spaghetti, soft meat or fish and dairy products.
- You can add extra gravy, sauces, butter, or custard to help soften food. Cereals can be softened by soaking in milk.
- You can blend, mince, mash and chop foods to soften.
- Avoid dry, hard or sharp foods such as the crust of pizza, toast crusts, biscuits, bread sticks, crisps, crispy chicken nuggets.

What are your favorite soft foods?

Let your parents or carers know what you like.



## Can I brush my teeth?

You should brush your teeth gently with toothpaste especially to clean next to the stitches. You will be given a special mouthwash to help to keep your mouth clean but you should use the mouthwash after brushing your teeth. The stitches in your mouth will slowly dissolve but this can take one to three months.

## **When can I go home?**

After the doctors have done your operation, there are three things you have to do. When you can do these well, you can go home! This will usually be 1-3 days after the operation.

The 3 things are:

1. eat and drink well
2. walk normally
3. brush your teeth well

When you get home, you will need to have showers only for 2 weeks.

## **What about school and sports?**

You can go back to school after 2 weeks. You can be quite active, but avoid physical or contact sports such as rugby, football or gymnastics for about 6 weeks.

## **Will I have to come back to the hospital?**

Yes. A review appointment will be arranged with the Nurse Specialist about 6 weeks after your operation. This is so the Nurse can check that your gum and hip have healed. After 6 months, you will be seen on the Cleft Clinic in Cardiff or Swansea by the team and you will have an X ray to check the result of the bone grafting.

## **If you have any questions or worries, what should you do?**

- You can ask your mum, dad or carer
- You can ask one of the Cleft team when you see us
- You or your parents/carers can telephone the Cleft Team on 01792 703810 or Ward M on 01792 618891

## Daniel's Story

I was really excited to stay in hospital. The day I went in all the nurses and doctors were really kind to me. Lisa, who is one of the nursery nurses, took me to the play room which I loved. There were lots of toys and games to play with and the nursery nurses were good fun. That day there was a magician in there and he was brilliant. We were all laughing and joining in the magic tricks with him.

Later that day, Lisa brought Boris the puppet to my bed and they told me all about what would happen when I had my operation. Boris was very naughty and a bit cheeky too. He was funny too though, and I wasn't scared at all.



My operation was good and the doctors and nurses really looked after me. Afterwards I didn't even feel like I had had an operation!

When it was time to go home I didn't want to leave all the lovely friends I had made. I was really sad but they gave me a hug and said I could pop in and see them when I go for my hospital appointments in the future.

I hope you enjoy it in hospital as much as I did.

Daniel







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

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