

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

Telephone: (01792) 703854

Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays)

8.30 am to 4.30 pm

An out-of-hours answering machine is available



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Author: Cleft Speech and Language Therapists,  
The Welsh Centre for Cleft Lip and Palate



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## Palate Re-Repair



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

Speech and Language Therapy

Morrison Hospital, Swansea, SA6 6NL

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

## Palate Re-Repair

This leaflet has been designed to help you understand the reasons for this surgery and will help to further explain the procedure.

### Why is a palate re-repair operation needed?

You/your child has been seen by the Cleft Surgeon and the Specialist Speech and Language Therapist who have identified that the soft palate (soft part of the roof of the mouth) does not work well enough to allow the correct production of all speech sounds.

The palate has an important role in speech production as it closes off the nose from the mouth during speech. Most sounds produced in English are made with the palate raised (with the nose cavity closed off). All the air from the lungs, therefore, exits the mouth allowing the production of 'oral' sounds, for example, 'p, b, t, d, k, g, f, v, s, z, sh, ch and j'.

In addition to this there are three sounds, 'm, n and ng', where the palate is lowered, allowing the air into the nose. These sounds are called 'nasals'. If the soft palate is not working well enough to close off the nose from the mouth, speech may have a 'nasal' quality. If this is the case, speech and language therapy alone is not enough to help and surgery is needed.

### What happens after the surgery?

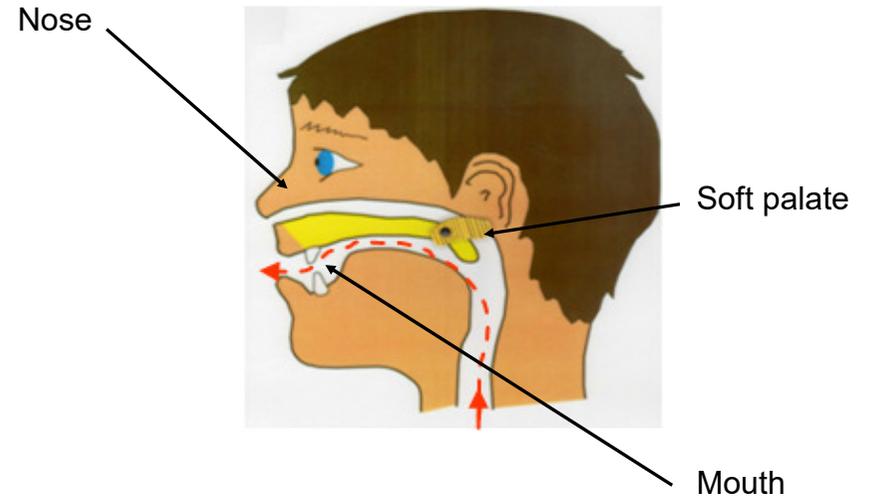
You/your child will be seen approximately six weeks after the surgery by the Cleft Surgeon to ensure the palate is healing. Until this appointment with the Cleft Surgeon, advice will be given to avoid rough and sharp-edged foods at all times, such as toast, crisps, nuts and biscuits. Further dietary advice will be given on the ward after the operation. A week off school/work is usually advised.



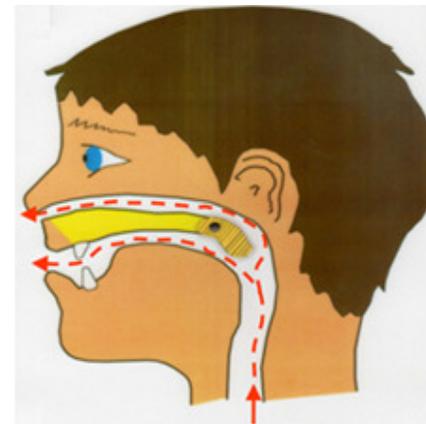
If you/your child were attending speech and language therapy before the operation, this can recommence once you/your child feel(s) well enough to attend. In the first six weeks following surgery, speech may sound different as a result of the palate healing.

Patients will then be assessed by a Speech and Language Therapist at Morriston Hospital six months after the surgery to monitor progress. On occasion, some patients may require repeat investigations such as an x-ray and further surgery for their speech. This will be discussed with you should it become necessary.

**Oral speech**  
Soft palate working well  
enough to close off the nose



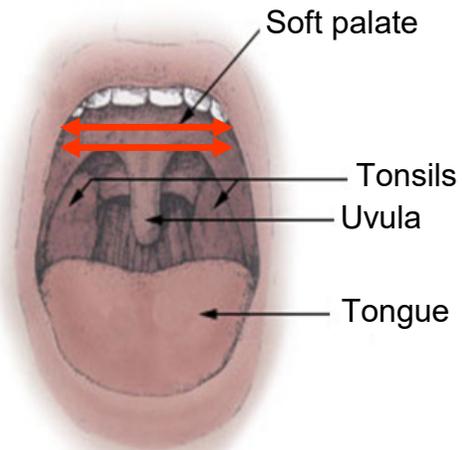
**Nasal speech**  
Soft palate not working well  
enough to close off the nose



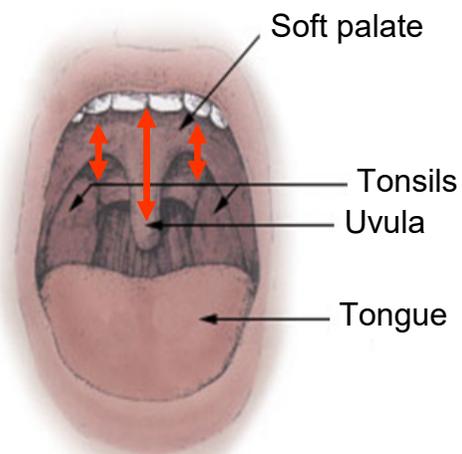
(Images from Harland and Bowden 1997)

### Why has this happened?

In a palate (roof of the mouth) that is working well, the muscles run from one side to another, in an arch, allowing the palate to close off the nose from the mouth. When you/your child was born with a cleft palate, the muscles in the palate ran in the wrong direction, from the front of the mouth to the back, instead of from side to side.



The red arrows show the muscle direction in a normal palate (side to side)



The red arrows show the muscle direction in a cleft palate (front to back)

When you/your child had the cleft palate repaired, the muscles were put in the correct position, running from side to side, but sometimes due to muscle contraction and scarring, the muscles can move back to their original position, running from front to back. This means that the palate cannot work properly. A palate re-repair operation helps to move the muscles back to the correct position again, running from side to side, allowing the palate to close off the nose from the mouth during speech.

### Where will the operation take place and how will I find out the date?

The operation is usually carried out in Morriston Hospital. You will receive a letter or a phone call confirming the date of the operation.

Parents can stay with their children on the ward whilst they are in hospital. You/your child will be admitted into hospital the day before or the day of the operation. The operation takes about 90 minutes. The palate will have a line of stitches along the middle which will dissolve about four weeks later. After the operation there is some discomfort, similar to a sore throat. You/your child will be given painkillers for this. You/your child will be in hospital until the day after surgery, or until a sufficient amount of food and drink can be taken.