

Post-Operative Feeding Guidelines Following Palate Repair

How should I feed my infant after surgery?

Your infant can immediately return to whichever cleft-adapted feeding method you were using prior to the palate repair. Your infant will continue to use a cleft-adapted bottle/nipple until one-month after the palate repair. After one month, you can switch to a non-adapted bottle or nipple or introduce a sippy cup.

How will surgery impact offering purees?

Do not offer purees for 7 days after palate repair. After 7 days you can begin to offer pureed foods that do not have chunks. One month after the palate repair, your child can return to a regular diet with no restrictions.

Is my infant allowed to have a pacifier after surgery?

Pacifiers should not be used for one month after surgery. It is best to wean the infant off of the pacifier prior to surgery. You can try poking a hole in the bottom of pacifier for a few days and then slowly cut the pacifier back every couple of days until the infant can no longer suck on the pacifier and becomes less interested.

What if my infant is not eating after surgery?

First, give your infant some time. Sometimes coming out of the anesthesia can be difficult. Start with offering the same bottle that you were using before surgery. If your infant continues to have difficulty, try using the next larger nipple size on the Dr. Brown Specialty Feeding System or one flow line faster on the Haberman (Medela Special Needs Feeder) bottle. You can also try offering liquids via a small open cup. If your infant continues to have difficulty, request a consultation with a speech-language pathologist.

Do I need to be seen back after surgery for feeding therapy?

Your infant should be seen back at Barrow Cleft and Craniofacial Center one week after surgery and again one month after surgery.

Summary for after surgery:

	Liquids	Purees	Pacifier
Post palate repair	Immediately return to preoperative regimen of cleft adaptive nipple/bottle or open cup. NO sippy cup after palate repair; convert to regular nipple/bottle, sippy cup or breast at 1 month after surgery	No purees for 7 days after repair After 7 days, return to pureed food only, no chunks. After one month, return to regular diet with no restrictions	No use of pacifier for 1 month after surgery

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