



## Instructions for Post-Surgery Care of Cleft Palate

### **I. The Best Position**

After surgery, a lateral position of the patient is most ideal.



### **II. Keep Airway Patent**

Cleft patients choke more often because of the greater amount of sputum in their lungs and usually have difficulties in swallowing. If it is a baby patient, the caretaker must know how to hold and tap the baby's back.

**Frequency:** Every 2 hours, especially when the baby comes back from the recovery room and after feeding.

#### **How:**

Curve your palm and gently tap the lower back of the baby, firmly but not hard enough to cause discomfort.



### III. Feeding

For the first three weeks after the patient's surgery, the cleft palate repair is not strong enough to resist damage that could be caused by foreign objects. Likewise, do not allow the patient to chew on anything, including feeding bottles or pacifiers. No hot or spicy food should be taken.



### Feeding instructions

#### First week

A full liquid diet, no solid form of food is allowed. A full liquid diet can be milk, formula, juices, well-melted ice cream, and slightly warm broth

#### Second week

A soft diet consists of foods "**that could be melted in the mouth.**" Do not give foods that need to be chewed. The soft diet can be ice cream, sherbets, frozen yogurt, puddings, custards, smooth yogurts, soft cereals, and pureed baby foods.

#### Third week

Food that the patient normally eats is fine.

### IV. Wound Cleansing

It is very important to do mouth cleansing each time after feeding. Before doing this, the caretaker should wash hands to prevent contamination.

**After each feeding:**

**If the patient around 1-year-old:** Give the patient water to drink to rinse the surgical area and to keep it clean.

**If the patient older than 4-year-old or an adult:** teeth brushing and gargling.

#### **V. Stitch removal**

Most cleft palate surgery is performed with self-dissolving stitches so there is no need for stitch removal. Please confirm with the doctor if you are not sure if the stitches are self-dissolving or not.

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