

Hip bone donor site, Bone graft to gum line

What is an alveolar bone graft?

An alveolar bone graft is an operation for a child who was born with both a cleft lip and a cleft palate. The graft is done to place bone to the upper jaw bone (alveolus) in the area of any clefts. This will help let the permanent teeth to come through the alveolus (erupt). It also helps to close the hole between your child's mouth and nose.

How is it done?

A small amount of bone is taken from your child's hip. The bone is removed from inside the hip, so the overall shape of the hip is not changed. The bone is shaped and then placed into the cleft.

The surgery takes about 2 to 3 hours. There will be stitches in the gums where the bone has been placed. There will be an incision with a small bandage on the hip.

What happens after the surgery?

After surgery, your child:

- Will most likely be in the hospital for 1 to 2 days.
- Will most likely be sore for at least 1 to 2 days. Medicine may be needed for the pain.
- Will have stitches in the mouth, under the upper lip. They will go away on their own after a few weeks.
- Will have a hip incision. This will also cause some pain. The incision will be covered with a bandage. This bandage needs to stay in place until the follow-up visit in 7 to 10 days. It will be removed at the first clinic visit after surgery. The stitches will dissolve on their own.
- Should brush only the bottom teeth until instructed otherwise by the surgeon. The surgeon will tell you when your child can start brushing all the teeth.
- **Your child will need to use a mouth rinse after all meals and before bed for 6 weeks.** At first, your child should use the prescription mouthwash. After a few weeks, have your child switch to a nonprescription mouthwash.
- May need to use crutches for a few days due to hip pain. Your child will be trained to use the crutches if needed before leaving the hospital.
- Will need to take an antibiotic at home after release from the hospital.

Diet:

- At first, your child will have an IV in the hospital. This will prevent dehydration and allow medicines to be given.
- Your child must be on a restricted, soft diet for 6 weeks to protect the surgical area as it heals.
- Do not let your child use a straw for at least 6 weeks after surgery.

Activity:

- Your child will need to be out of school for about a week.
- Your child may take a short shower 2 to 3 days after surgery.
- Your child must have limited activity for 6 weeks. This means no gym class, no playground activities, no sports, and no rough play.
- Your child will be able to resume speech therapy as long as the speech exercises do not involve puffing the upper lip or cheeks.

Follow up:

Your child will need an appointment in the clinic 5 to 10 days after surgery. They will also need many appointments in the weeks after surgery. This is important so the doctor can make sure your child is healing properly.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child:

- Has severe pain that does not go away.
- Has a lot of bleeding from the nose or mouth.
- Has vomiting that will not stop.
- Has a fever of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher.
- Is not drinking enough fluids.
- Has a bad mouth odor.
- Spits out small bone chips.
- Has bone chips that can be seen in the area where the surgery was done.
- Has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.