

# Cleft Lip/Palate

## FACTS:

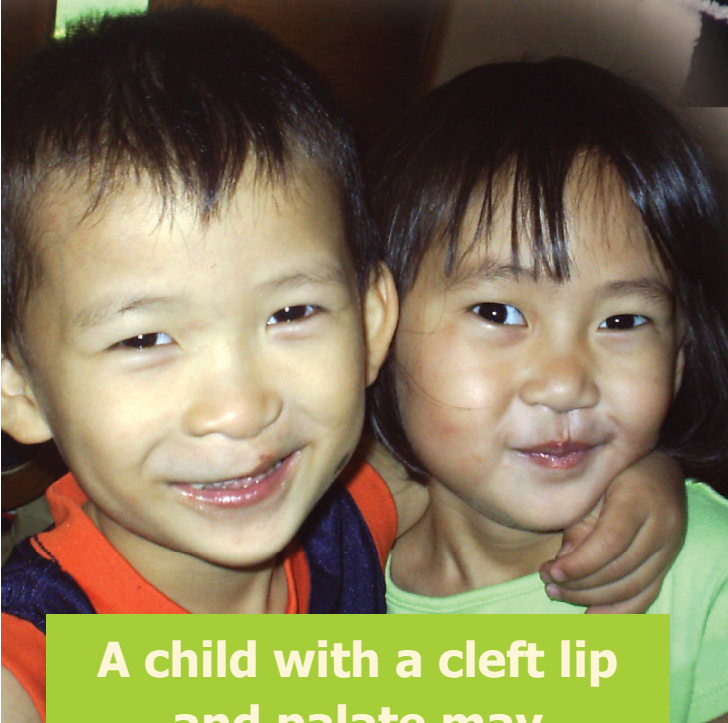
- Cleft lip or palate is not caused by something the mother or father did or did not do. In the normal course of development, structures simply do not close as is typical.
- Children with cleft lip/palate may have difficulty speaking clearly or may sound as if they are speaking through the nose.
- Children with cleft lip/palate may have difficulty eating. Food may come through the nose.
- Children with cleft lip/palate may have frequent middle ear infections and may tend to have dental cavities.

## TREATMENT:

- Cleft lip/palate may be surgically corrected.
- Middle ear infections should be treated by a physician.
- Speech therapy may help the child to speak more clearly.
- Good brushing of the teeth is very important.



Cleft lip and palate can be surgically corrected.



A child with a cleft lip and palate may develop ear infections.

# Cleft Lip/Palate

## SPEECH:

- Reward a child for trying to speak.
- Look directly at the child when you speak so he may see how your lips and tongue move to produce sounds. Make sounds clear and precise. Practice simple words together.
- Play copycat games. For example, have the child imitate or copy what you say.
- Blow bubbles, whistles or horns. Hold a tissue and try to make it move by blowing.

## FEEDING/SWALLOWING:

- The child should be in an upright position.
- If food comes out of the nose, child should be seated upright, chin tucked toward chest, shoulders pulled forward
- The child should be fed thick foods (such as thicker congee) that is chilled or room temperature.
- A child should use a cup with a side cut out. The head should not tilt back to take sips.
- A specially designed bottle may be needed. If a special bottle is not available, use a squeezable bottle with an orthodontic nipple and cut a larger "X" hole.



Help with speech may be needed.



A baby should be held upright when eating.



- Babies should be burped frequently.
- Babies will take a longer period of time to feed. Twenty to thirty minutes to take a two to three ounce bottle is normal.
- Babies may need to eat smaller amounts but feed more often—such as early morning, mid-morning, lunch, mid-afternoon, early evening and later evening.