

CLEFT LIP AND/OR PALATE



Did you know?

1 in every 700 newborns globally is born with a cleft lip and/or palate, one of the most common birth defects in many developing countries.

WHAT IS CLEFT?

A cleft occurs when parts of the lip and/or palate do not fuse properly during fetal development. A cleft lip and/or palate may affect one side of the mouth and face (unilateral) or both sides (bilateral).

RISK FACTORS

- ➔ Genetic predisposition (an increased chance of developing a condition because of the genes you inherit) is a major cause.
- ➔ Poor maternal nutrition, tobacco use, alcohol consumption and obesity during pregnancy also play a role.



WHAT YOU CAN DO



Reconstructive surgery: many children with clefts never receive the surgery they need. When lip and palate clefts are treated with reconstructive surgery, complete rehabilitation is possible.



Protect oral health: even children who have had cleft surgery remain at increased risk of oral diseases such as tooth decay and gum disease. Good oral hygiene and preventive oral health care are essential.



Access to specialized dental care: children born with a cleft require regular dental care, including ongoing monitoring, education, support and treatment, to help prevent oral disease and maintain a healthy smile.

WHY EARLY ACTION MATTERS

Cleft lip and/or palate can often be diagnosed during pregnancy, sometimes as early as the 13th week. An ultrasound scan may identify a cleft lip, while a cleft palate is harder to detect. If a cleft is not detected during pregnancy, it can usually be identified at birth, when the baby should be referred promptly to an experienced cleft team. Early diagnosis helps families understand the care and support their baby may need.

WHERE TO GO NEXT

Smile Train, the world's largest cleft-focused organization, has developed a range of resources on cleft lip and palate.



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Health Day**
20 March



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EVERYWHERE
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TO JOIN US

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