

Cleft palate repair: Feeding your child

After surgery for cleft palate, your child needs a balanced diet of non-irritating foods. This is important to prevent infection and encourage healing. Here are some ideas for what and how to feed your child.

Place your child in a sitting position for feeding. Feed using only a spoon - no fork or other utensils. Do not give any foods served on a stick.

Give liquids from a cup, or use the side of a spoon. Do not use straws. Do not use a bottle, unless your doctor has told you to. In that case, use only the type of nipple supplied by the hospital.

After your child eats, use water to rinse traces of food from the mouth.

What should my child eat?

Your child should eat only smooth foods. Many table foods can be smoothed in a blender or food processor to an even, baby-food texture. Add liquids such as chicken or beef broth, milk, gravy, or smooth sauces to meats and vegetables. Use fruit juice to blend with fruit. See the education sheet "Blenderizing guidelines", and the table of foods to use and foods to avoid, next page.

For extra protein:

- Melt **cheese** into soups, casseroles, scrambled eggs, or other hot dishes. Blenderize if needed.
- Add **nonfat dry milk powder** to milk, ice cream, yogurt, pudding, soup, hot cereal, soft-cooked or scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, gravies, sauces, and casseroles. Use 1 to 2 tablespoons in each 4-ounce serving. Blenderize casseroles if needed.
- **Use commercial products:** Pediasure® (made by Abbott), Boost® (made by Nestle), or Carnation Instant Breakfast® (made by Nestle). They can be found at many stores such as Target, Walgreens, Cub, or Rainbow.

What else do I need to know?

Continue using these guidelines until the doctor advises you to increase the texture of the foods your child can eat.

Food group	Foods allowed	Foods to avoid
Milk and dairy products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • infant formula • milk or milk products • cream soups, strained • ice cream, sherbet • pudding, custard • yogurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any milk products with seeds or nuts • ice cream with bits of candy or chips • yogurt with seeds, granola, or fruit pieces
Meat or meat substitutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • soft-cooked meats, fish, poultry, or legumes, processed to baby-food texture • soft-cooked or scrambled eggs, eggnog • tofu, mashed • cottage cheese, small-curd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole pieces of meat, fish, or poultry • cold cuts, sausage, hot dogs • hard-cooked eggs • peanut butter
Fruits and vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fruit or vegetable juices • baby-food fruits and vegetables • vegetables, cooked and blended with broth or sauce • fruits, cooked or mashed and blended with fruit juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole (fresh) or canned fruits or vegetables • tart or sour fruits such as citrus (lemon, orange) • thick or gummy mashed vegetables • pickles, coleslaw, or leafy lettuce • fried vegetables
Breads and other starchy foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooked cereals: cream of wheat, cream of rice, oatmeal (thinned as needed) • soft-cooked macaroni or noodles, mashed • mashed potatoes (thinned as needed) • dry cereal, crushed and soaked in milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • breads, toast, buns, bagels • muffins, sweet rolls • dry cereal • crackers, cookies, popcorn, pretzels, chips
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • butter, oil, plain dressing such as mayonnaise • gelatin desserts • herbs, spices (powdered only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gum, caramels, jelly beans • lollipops, hard candy • honey, syrup, molasses

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call Nutrition Services at your hospital during daytime hours.

Children's - Minneapolis: (612) 813-6865

Children's - St. Paul: (651) 220-6216

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: www.childrensmn.org.