

Who can I speak to if I am worried or have any questions?

Your surgeon will be able to answer any questions you or your family may have about bone grafts. You may like to write any questions down so you don't forget them.

My Surgeon is:

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My Orthodontist is:

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If you would like more information you or your family can telephone the Cleft Team on: 0121 333 8235.

More information and access to the Internet is available in the Child and Family Information Centre. You can look for information yourself or you can ask the Information Officer to help you. This is on the Ground Floor of the hospital near the Main Reception Desk.

This leaflet was produced by the Cleft Team.

Information Leaflet for Children

Your Alveolar Bone Graft Operation

West Midlands Regional Centre For Cleft Lip and Palate

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What is an alveolar bone graft?

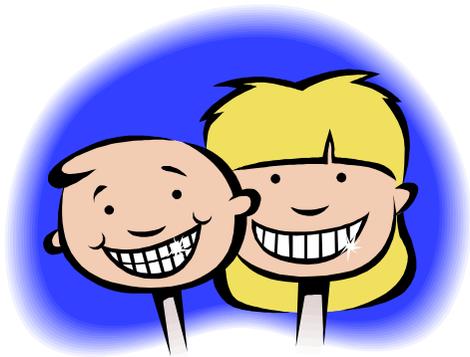
The “alveolar ridge” is the arch of bone under your gums. Some children who have a cleft have a gap in their gum in their top jaw. This gap needs to be repaired. This is done by putting bone into the gap when you are about 8-12 years old. This operation is called an alveolar bone graft. Lots of children have this operation.

Why do I need a bone graft?

Teeth need bone to grow through. The bone graft operation is needed so your teeth can be put into a good position. The operation should also stop any drinks, chocolate or yoghurt leaking into your nose as they may do now.

Is there any other treatment I could have instead?

A bone graft is the best treatment to repair the gap in your gum. If you do not have a bone graft it will be difficult to get your teeth in the right place. So the operation is important to give you a nice smile.



Before the bone graft operation

Before your operation you will have impressions taken of your teeth in clinic. You will also have X-Rays and photographs taken. This is so that the surgeon can plan your treatment.

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You may need braces to help straighten your teeth. This should not be painful. You may have to visit the Orthodontist regularly so that your braces can be adjusted.

Data Protection

We collect information about you and your treatment and store it in written records and on computer. We may have to share some of your information with other people and organisations. If you have any questions and/or do not want us to share information with others please talk to the people looking after you or contact the PALS Officer (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on 0121 3338403.

The bone graft operation

Your operation will be done at the Children's Hospital. During the operation bone is taken from your hip bone through a small cut. The surgeon will then fill the gap in your gum with the pieces of bone from your hip.

Do I have to stay in hospital?

You should be in hospital for one night.

Can someone stay in hospital with me?

Your Mum or Dad or a carer will be able to stay on the Ward with you if you would like them to.

What might go wrong and what do you do?

Sometimes the operation does not work. But this does not happen very often. If this does happen the operation may need to be done again.

What happens after the bone graft operation?

After the operation you will be able to walk easily and you should be able to go home the next day. It takes about 10 days for your gum to heal. Your face may be a little swollen after the operation but this will soon get better. The stitches in your mouth will be dissolvable and will disappear in about 3 weeks.

Your gum may feel uncomfortable and a little painful. But you can ask the nurse who is looking after you to give you some medicine for this.

You will have a small scar your hip which will heal quickly.

What happens when I go home?

You will need to eat soft food until your mouth has healed. You will need to avoid food that is hard or food that has sharp edges like crisps, crusty bread or apples. It is also important to keep your mouth very

clean. You can gently brush the teeth in your bottom gum and you should wash your mouth out with water after eating.

You will not be able to go to school, play sport or ride your bike for about a week after your operation.



What happens when my mouth has healed?

You will need to come back to see the surgeon who will check that your gum has healed. You will meet the Orthodontist (a special dentist who can straighten and move teeth) when you come to clinic. Your surgeon works with the Orthodontist who will position your teeth correctly when you are a little older.