



“My child was born with a cleft lip and palate”

Cleft lip and/or palate are congenital abnormalities.

The type and severity of the cleft can vary, involving only the lip (cleft lip) or palate (cleft palate) or both together (unilateral or bilateral cleft lip and palate). Submucous cleft palate may first present because of speech concerns, usually around the age of three years. Indicators may be nasal speech, poor articulation development, history of nasal regurgitation of liquids/solids, ear infections and conductive hearing loss.

A cleft lip is usually surgically repaired at around the age of three months. A cleft palate is usually repaired between six and 12 months.

This condition can result in poor articulation development, reduced intelligibility, nasal sounding speech, language delay and psychosocial difficulties.

Referral to a speech and language therapist can add value by:

- Assessing the child’s difficulties and contributing aetiological factors
- Advising if surgery or therapy is needed
- Monitoring ongoing communication difficulties
- Developing individual therapy programmes for the child