

Cleft Lip and Palate

Also called: Harelip

Cleft lip and cleft palate are birth defects that affect the upper lip and roof of the mouth. They happen when the tissue that forms the roof of the mouth and upper lip don't join before birth.



The problem can range from a small notch in the lip to a groove that runs into the roof of the mouth and nose.

This can affect the way the child's face looks. It can also lead to problems with eating, talking and ear infections.

Treatment usually is surgery to close the lip and palate. Doctors often do this surgery in several stages. Usually the first surgery is during the baby's first year.

With treatment, most children with cleft lip or palate do well.