



Kapi'olani Oral Cleft Clinic

Cleft lip and cleft palate are among the most common problems found in newborn babies. Each year in the U.S., more than 51,000 babies are born with clefts, or about one newborn in every 750 live births.

A cleft lip is an opening in the lip. A cleft palate is an opening in the roof of the mouth. They result from incomplete development very early in pregnancy. We don't know why it occurs, but it was not due to anything you did. Most clefts are apparently due to a combination of genetics and environmental factors. Research is under way to learn more about these causes.

A comprehensive, team approach

We want to reassure you that your baby's condition can be corrected, especially with proper diagnosis and treatment by a team with the right specialists working together for the best possible outcome for your child. The Kapi'olani Oral Cleft Clinic provides this team approach for babies and children who were born with cleft lip, or palate, or both.

The needs of your baby are going to change at different stages of growth and development. From the beginning it is important that the various specialists work together to provide a comprehensive plan of care for the long-term health of your child. The team-based, multidisciplinary approach is the best way to recognize and treat the full spectrum of problems associated with cleft conditions, including those related to speech and language skills.

It is the goal of our Oral Cleft Clinic to make the sometimes stressful care of a child with a cleft as easy for you as

possible. We are here to assist you with timely appointments and ongoing coordination of care until your child reaches young adulthood.

Kapi'olani Oral Cleft Team

The specialists who are members of the Kapi'olani Oral Cleft Team include:

- a craniofacial surgeon for lip, palate and other craniofacial repairs
- an oral surgeon for specialized palate and other craniofacial repairs
- a neonatologist or pediatrician for medical needs
- a geneticist to provide parents with information and counseling if needed
- developmental and behavioral pediatricians to provide support for the child and family for related concerns
- an audiologist to evaluate and manage hearing problems
- a speech therapist to address concerns about feeding and speech development
- an occupational therapist for concerns about feeding
- an otolaryngology physician, also known as an ear, nose and throat doctor
- a pediatric dentist
- an orthodontist
- a nurse to help coordinate recommendations of the team
- a case manager from the Special Health Needs Division of the state Department of Health to help you with appointments and also help with coordination of care

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Kapi'olani Clinic

Your child's primary physician can make a referral to the Oral Cleft Clinic before your baby leaves the hospital or after discharge. Contact the Kapi'olani Call Center at (808) 535-7927. Neighbor Island residents can call toll free at (866) 928-7927.

During your first visit you will check in at the Outpatient Clinic, and then be directed to the Oral Cleft Clinic. Up to a half dozen specialists will be scheduled to see your child. They will do so one after another and the examination may take about two hours. The benefit of arranging all these visits at one time is so team members can meet and consult with each other after they see your child. There may also be team members who do not examine your child on the first visit but who still offer expert consultation or advice. For example, your baby may be too young for a dental visit at this time, but the team dentist may have recommendations about dental care for the future.

From these multiple exams, the Oral Cleft Clinic will produce a comprehensive plan of care. It will be your long-term road map, spelling out what services are needed, when they are needed, where they will be provided and who will provide them. The Clinic nurse will call you shortly after the examination day to discuss the plan of care and to answer your questions.

Your child's primary physician will get a copy of the clinic report and plan of care. We encourage you to discuss the plan with your child's doctor. Any of the specialists who saw your child will always be available to answer specific questions. And of course you can seek a second opinion or see other professionals at any time.

Community Support Services

Children with Special Health Needs Programs: staff from this state agency will meet you at the Oral Cleft Clinic to explain what they do and give you an application if you wish to participate. They can also help you obtain community services such as nutrition consultation and may be able to provide limited financial assistance. You can reach them in Honolulu at 733-9055.

Early Intervention Services: if there are concerns about developmental delays, children from birth to age three qualify for free services through the Department of Health's Early Intervention Services. Their assistance includes case management; speech, occupational and physical therapies; and early childhood education. Call the Hawaii Keiki Information Service System (H-KISS) at 955-7273. From the Neighbor Islands call (800) 235-5477.

The birth of a baby with a cleft can produce feelings of anxiety and grief. These are natural feelings. But remember — your child's condition can be corrected and we are here to help. The Kapi'olani Oral Cleft Team will work together with you to provide the best possible care and outcome for your child.

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