

Your Guide to

Alveolar Bone Graft Surgery



Craniofacial Center

Your Guide to

Alveolar Bone Graft Surgery



Craniofacial Center

601 Children's Lane, Norfolk, Virginia 23507 | CHKD.org/Craniofacial | (757) 668-7031

This guide is made possible by



American Legion
Child Welfare Foundation

Hi, _____ !

Now that you're getting older, it's time for the next step in creating a great smile for you. This step is going to require some work on your part, so we want you to understand the goals of your treatment and why you need to have this done.

The next step involves an operation that will fix the bone inside your upper gums. You have a gap in that bone, and we need to fill it so that your teeth will grow in normally. It will also help the floor of your nose.



We want you to feel prepared and confident. So in this book we have answered some of the questions kids usually have about this operation. There are also tips from other kids who have already had this operation and space for you to write down your own feelings or questions.

We have 100 percent confidence in you. We know you have what it takes to do everything you need to do.

You got this.

And just like always, we're here to help you every step of the way.



Craniofacial Center

Q: Why do I need to have this operation now?

A

- Sometimes when babies are born with special medical conditions,
- like a cleft lip and/or palate, they need to get bigger before doctors can finish helping them. Now that you have lost your baby teeth, it is a good time to have this operation.

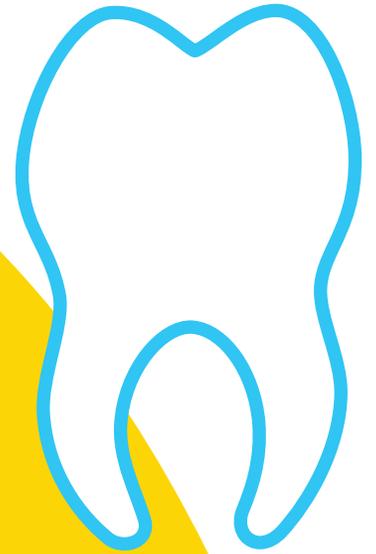
It will help make sure your adult teeth can grow the way they should so you will have a great smile.



**How many
baby teeth
have you lost
already?**

I have lost

baby teeth.

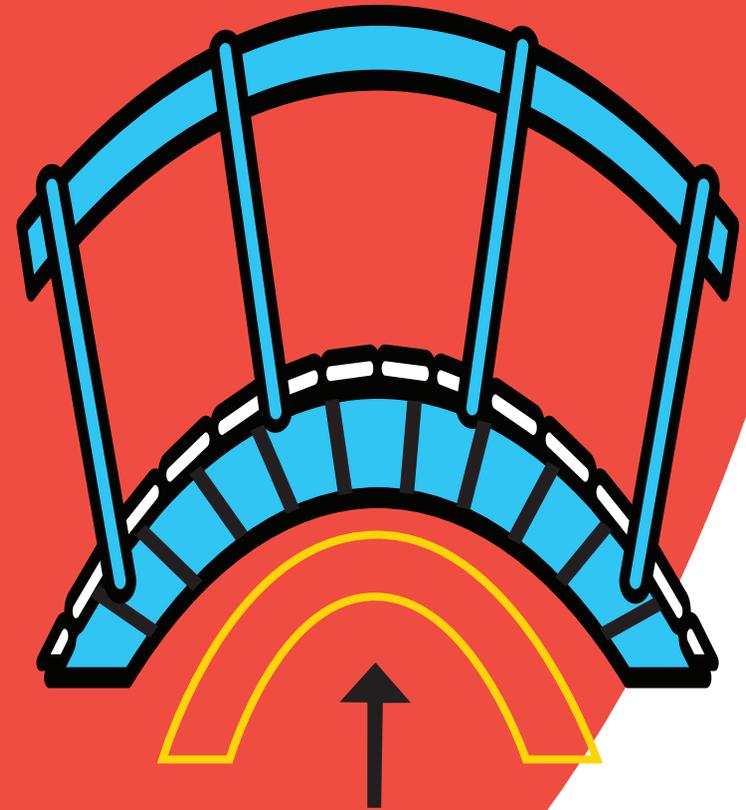


Q: Why do I need to have this operation at all?

A: Because of your cleft lip and/or palate, you may have splits in your lip or openings in the roof of your mouth. These openings can affect the bone that holds your teeth in place. This bone is called your dental arch. An arch is shaped like an upside down letter "U."

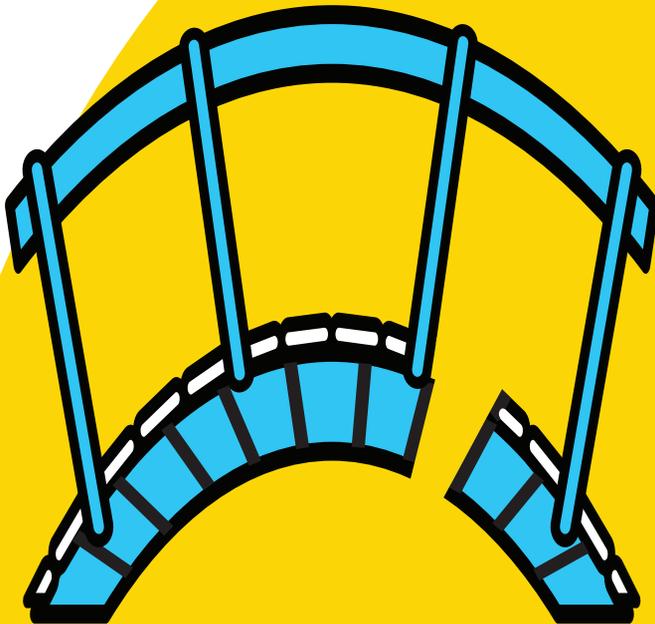


Many bridges have arches.



Can you see the upside down "U"?

Now imagine there is an open space in the bridge.



Someone will need to patch the hole so that people can cross to the other side and the bridge will be safe and strong.

Just like the bridge needs to have its holes fixed, the doctor needs to patch the holes in your dental arch to make it strong and healthy.

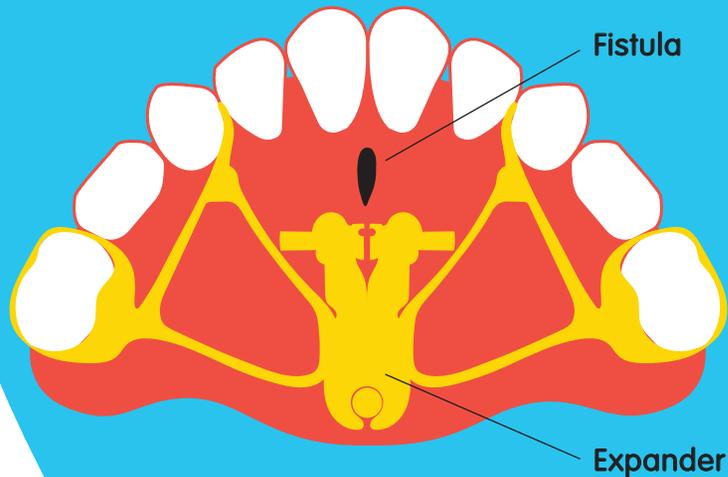
Q: What will I need to do to get ready?

A: For several months before your operation, you will need to take really good care of your mouth and teeth so they are healthy and ready when it is time to fix your arch. You will need to floss and brush your teeth after every meal. You may need to wear braces.

You will see a special dentist called an orthodontist who will help you. The orthodontist will put a small gadget, called an expander, in your mouth that will spread the roof of your mouth and get your arch ready for your operation.

My orthodontist's name is

While you have this expander in your mouth, your biggest job is to brush and floss your teeth every morning, every night and after every meal. It might seem like a lot to remember, but we know you can do it. Brushing will help keep your teeth and mouth healthy and ready for your operation.



While your expander is making room in your mouth, you may begin to see a small hole in the roof of your mouth. This hole leads to your nose and is called a fistula. You may have never noticed this hole before, because it might have been hidden in the folds of your palate.

Imagine a blanket with a small hole in it. You might not see the hole if your blanket is folded, but once you pick it up and spread it out, the hole is easier to see. The same is true for your fistula. After your expander begins to widen the roof of your mouth, your fistula may become easier to see or even get bigger. Your fistula might make you talk funny or make food or drinks come out of your nose. The larger your fistula is, the more food or drink may come through it. If you have a fistula, fixing it will be an important part of your operation.

You will go back to your orthodontist right before your operation. During this visit, your expander will be replaced with a smaller gadget which will stay in your mouth during the operation and while you heal. Your orthodontist and your doctor will plan your surgery together.

Q: What will the doctor do during my operation?

A: During the operation, the doctor will patch up the open spaces in your arch so that it is completely connected from one side of your mouth to the other, like a bridge.

Your doctor will take tiny pieces of bone from either your hip or your head to use as the patch for your arch. You will have stitches that will keep your patch in place. They will go away on their own in about two weeks.

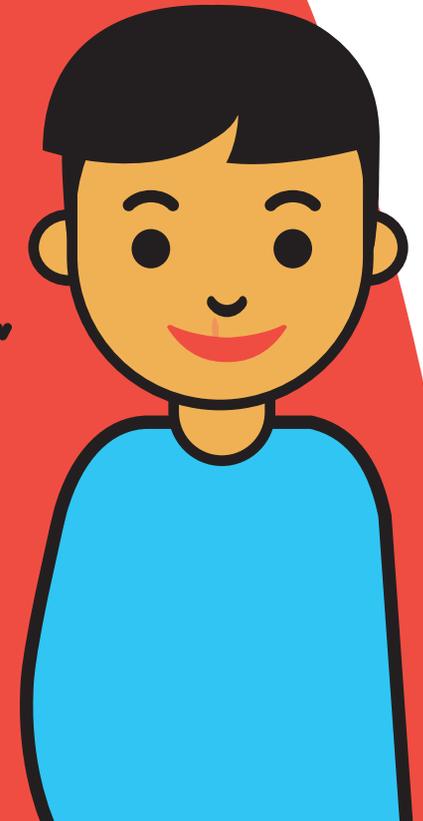
You will take a special medicine so that you will sleep during your operation. You will not feel or remember anything.

My doctor's name is

My operation is on

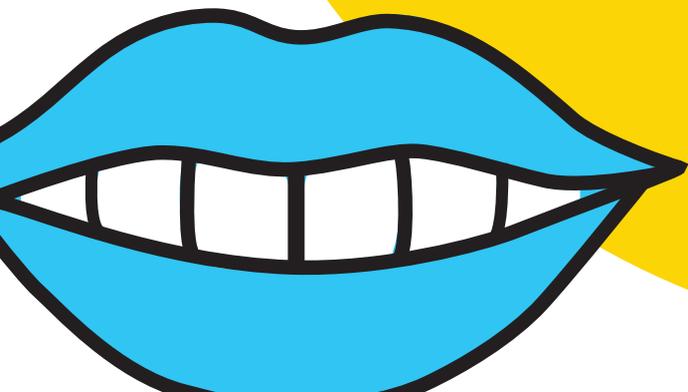
**"My doctors
were the best."**

**- Kaiden,
age 10**



Q • What will I feel like after my operation?

A • After you wake up, your face and mouth may feel tingly or numb. Later, your mouth and gums will get sore and swollen, and your hip or your head may hurt a little too (depending on where your patching pieces came from). Your doctor will order medicine that will help you feel better in the hospital and at home.



“My mouth felt really numb after my operation.”

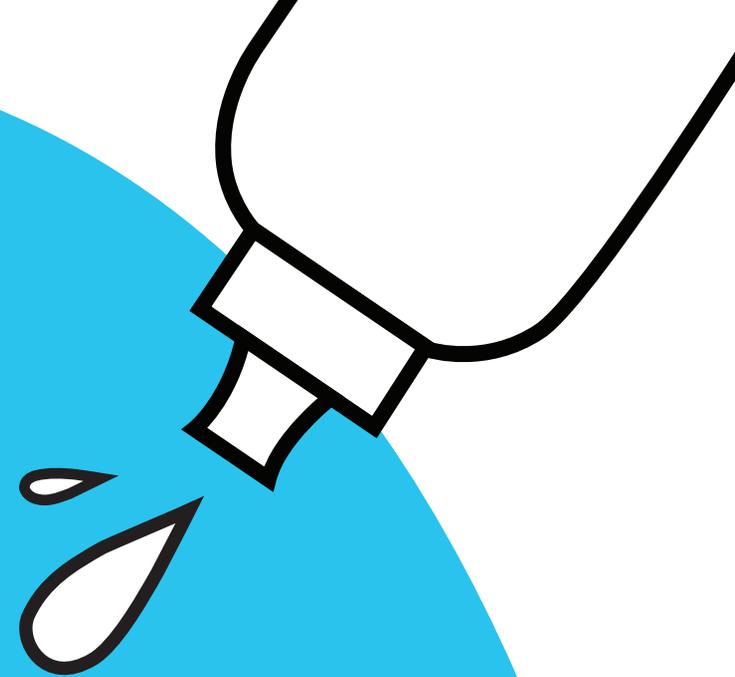
- Paige, age 9

I am feeling

about my surgery.

If your patching pieces came from your head, you will have a white bandage wrapped around your head when you wake up. It will feel like you are wearing a snug headband. Your parents can take it off after about 24 hours.

There will be a red line with stitches that is about two inches long on your head. Your hair will be shaved around the line. Your parents will put cream on it to help it heal faster. You will be able to wear a hat if you want. Your hair will grow back and cover the red area and your stitches will disappear in just a few weeks.



If your patching pieces came from your hip, you will have a special bandage over it and you will be sore or numb for two or three days. Walking and moving around will help the soreness go away faster. You probably won't feel it at all after four to five days.

You can leave the bandage on for about a week and even shower with it. Just be careful not to get it too wet. When your hip bandage comes off, your parents will rub a little cream on that spot three to four times a day for two weeks. The stitches will disappear on their own.

You may be able to go home the day of your surgery, but sometimes kids stay in the hospital overnight. Sleeping sitting propped up with two or three pillows may sound funny, but it will help your mouth feel better. After you are at home, you'll be able to take a shower.

Q ● Can I brush my teeth after my operation?

A ● Because of your stitches, you won't be able to brush your top teeth for about two or three weeks. You will be able to brush your bottom teeth with a very soft toothbrush, and the doctor will also give you a special mouthwash to help kill the germs in your mouth.

You should rinse your mouth with water after every time you eat. This will help clean around the area that the doctor patched.

Q ● What can I eat after my operation?

A ● You will have to eat a special soft diet right after your operation. This may not be easy, but we want to make sure that your gums and mouth can heal.

Right after your operation, it will feel good to drink really cold things like slushies, milkshakes or ice cream.

What are your favorite soft foods?

For the next three weeks, you can eat very soft foods like: mashed potatoes, ice cream, yogurt, smoothies, noodles, eggs, liquid soups, popsicles and apple sauce. Stay away from hard, pointy foods like chips and pretzels. They may poke and hurt you.

It is important that you follow this diet, because it will help you get better sooner. After three weeks you should be able to eat all of your favorite foods again!

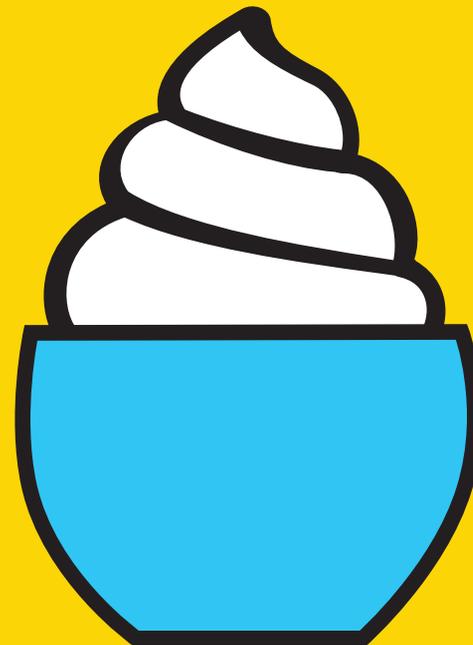
“I didn’t realize how much I was going to have to change what I ate, but I had peanut butter, yogurt, chocolate milkshakes and soft mac and cheese.”

– John, age 9

Q: Will I have to miss school?

A: Yes, if you have your operation during the school year, you will have to stay home for about a week. You will also get a note from your doctor to bring with you when you go back to school

because you will need to skip PE and recess for about six weeks. It might not be easy to sit out, but it is important because your body needs time to heal.



Q: What happens next?

A:

- You will see your team at CHKD to make sure you are healed and healthy.
- You will also see the orthodontist again after about 10 weeks. Many kids need to wear special headgear or have braces after their operation to help fix their teeth.

When you are almost an adult, you may need to have braces again and another operation to make sure your mouth and nose stay healthy. The team at CHKD will watch you as you grow and do whatever we can to help you stay healthy and strong.

**I am feeling _____
after my operation.**

I want to bring

**with me to the hospital for
my operation.**

**I want to ask my doctor
about**



Craniofacial Center

601 Children's Lane, Norfolk, Virginia 23507 | CHKD.org/Craniofacial | (757) 668-7031

This guide is made possible by



American Legion
Child Welfare Foundation

Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1 (757) 668-8246. 주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 1 (757) 668-8246