**Contacting our office**

Our highest priority is for every patient to be able to access our department when they have a question about their care. Please use the following guidelines to contact our office if you have questions about your care:

1. To **schedule an appointment**, please call 202-444-8751 and press option #2
2. Refer to FAQs to see if your question is addressed in our list
3. **Patient Portal**-**This is the best method to get a response within the same day**. Our nurse practitioners will monitor patient messages throughout the day and respond by the end of the workday. Please refer to the last page of your discharge instructions on how to set up the patient portal.
4. **Contacting office**-Call 202-444-7073 to speak to front desk.
5. **After hours care**- For any urgent after hours needs, call 202-444-7243 and ask for the Plastic Surgery Resident on call.
6. To obtain **test results or get a copy of your medical record**, please call 202-444-8751 and press option #3
7. To inquire about **billing or a referral**, please call 202-444-8751 and press option #4
8. To find **directions** to Georgetown Hospital, please call 202-444-8751 and press option #5

**Dr. Baker – Cleft Palate Postoperative Instructions**

**Incision Care:**

A tongue suture may have been placed to keep the tongue forward and the airway open. It will be removed the night of surgery or the next morning. Dissolvable sutures are used to close the palate. They do not need to be removed and should dissolve on their own in 3-4 weeks. No formal wound care is needed for palate sutures. Your baby’s saliva will wash the wound clean. Baby should drink clear liquids after feeds to prevent crusting and breakdown of intra-oral sutures. A small amount of blood from the mouth and nose is normal but if bleeding is excessive, call the office.

**Diet:**

After cleft palate repair, baby will be given sips of water and will then progress to clear liquids. Soft foods will slowly be added. Keep baby on a soft diet for 3 weeks after palate repair. No hard candy or crunchy foods are allowed. Do not feed peanut butter or other sticky foods (bread and soft cheese) as they may get stuck in the palate. Use cups or spoons for feeding. Avoid straws and forks and do not allow self feeding. Depending on age, you may be able to wean the child from a bottle before surgery so he/she will be comfortable drinking from a cup. You may need to feed your child more frequently as the soft diet may not satisfy hunger as well as a regular diet. Drooling may be seen for 1-2 weeks after surgery and it is normal. Offer liquids frequently to replace the lost fluids.

**Restraints:**

The baby should wear No-Nos for four weeks following surgery. This keeps baby from putting anything hard that may damage the sutures in the mouth. Avoid letting anything hard or sharp near the sutured area. Use soft, stuffed toys that do not have button eyes. Teach other children and family members not to put anything near the baby’s mouth and not to give hard food to the baby. Baby may play with stuffed or soft animals without button eyes, large blocks that do not fit in the mouth, large balls, soft water toys, and busy boxes. Do not allow baby to play with balloons, pencils, sharp pointed toys, small toys, rocking horses, or crayons. Arm restraints may be removed during bath time, however close supervision is needed. Check your baby’s arms for skin irritation throughout the day. Wearing the restraints over a long sleeved t-shirt may help prevent irritation. \

**Positioning:**

The baby can sleep in a normal position after surgery. It is best to keep the baby in a position that allows secretions to drain. Sometimes elevating the head of the crib will help with swelling.

**Medications:**

Antibiotics are not routinely used after cleft palate repair. A narcotic pain medication will be given for pain. Irritability related to pain should improve in about 3 to 4 days however your baby may seem out of sorts for up to 2 weeks. Expect changes in your child’s sleeping, eating, and playing habits. Your child may need extra attention during this time so do not be concerned about spoiling him/her.

**Reasons to Call:**

Temperature of 101.5 or above

Excessive drainage and/or bleeding

Increased redness

Increased swelling or abnormal swelling of one side compared to the other

Pain that is not tolerable after taking pain medication

Inability to urinate within 6 hours of leaving the hospital

**myMedStar Patient Portal**

**myMedStar** is a free, secure and convenient way to manage your health care and communicate with your physician.  
  
**With myMedStar you can:**  
● Request and view upcoming appointments  
● View most lab, radiology and pathology results as soon as they are available  
● Renew prescriptions  
● Exchange secure email messages with any of your MedStar Health care providers  
● View summaries of your hospital or office visits  
● And more  
  
**How to Enroll:**  
  
**Self-enrollment**  
1. Go to *myMedstar.org*  
2. Click **Enroll Now**  
3. Follow the instructions to enroll. You will need:  
  
● First and last name  
● Date of birth  
● Email address or this **PatientID - Your unique patient ID appears on page one of your discharge paperwork**

**Email Invitation:**  
  
If you provided an email address during registration you should have received an invitation to enroll in the myMedStar patient portal.  
  
● From within the invitation, click the link to accept the invitation.  
● After successful verification, you will be prompted to create your account. Follow the onscreen instructions to complete the enrollment process.  
  
MedStar Health is dedicated to helping improve your overall health care experience by providing convenient, streamlined resources to help you better manage your health. We now offer the ability for you to securely connect some of the health management apps you may use(i.e. fitness trackers, dietary trackers, etc.) to your health record. Email us at mymedstar@medstar.net if you are interested. Once we receive your request, MedStar Health will work with the appropriate vendors to determine if they meet the technical requirements in order to establish a secure connection.  
  
If you have questions or need assistance creating your account, please contact myMedStar support toll free at 1-877-745-5656, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.