

Deformed lips

Cleft lips and cleft palates are congenital deformities developed during gestation. They occur in about zero point one per cent of Asians. If a couple produces a baby with a cleft lip or cleft palate, the likelihood of having another baby with the same condition increases to four per cent.

A cleft lip is a lip with a gap or an indentation, and the gap can extend up to the nose in some cases.

A cleft palate is a condition in which the two plates at the roof of the mouth do not completely fuse together. This can affect both the hard plate and soft plate which in turn can affect the child's appearance and cause problems for him or her when eating or talking. It can also cause ear infection.

Cleft lips and plates can be treated. Children with these conditions are treated by a team of medical professionals including plastic surgeons, otorhinolaryngologists, dentists, speech therapists and psychologists from childhood to young adulthood. Surgery is performed to repair a child's cleft lip when he or she is about three months old. In the case of a cleft palate, surgery is performed at a later stage – when the child is nine to 12 months old. Some children may need revision surgery during childhood and adolescence.