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Palate Investigation Clinic

What is palate investigation clinic?

Palate investigation clinic (PIC) is a three-stop clinic held at Addenbrooke’s Hospital in Cambridge, to assess the movement of the palate during speech.

- It is an all-day clinic where assessments are taken and you have the chance to discuss the findings on the day, ask any questions, and make a plan of action with the team.
- It is run by the members of the cleft lip and palate team, including a surgeon, specialist speech and language therapists and clinical psychologists.

- PIC looks at what the soft palate does during speech. It needs to lift to touch the back wall of the nose and throat during speech (and eating).
- If it does not reach, there may be a ‘nasal’ quality to the voice and air may escape down the nose for some sounds in speech
- A moving x-ray allows us to see where and how well the palate moves and whether it reaches the back wall of the nose and throat as it should.

What happens at PIC

First, you will meet a member of the team who will fill in consent forms with you and record height and weight.

Then, there are three main separate appointments with breaks between them.

1. A video recording of speech: conversation, counting and sentence repetition with pictures in clinic 7.
2. A visit to the x-ray department on level 3 for a short video x-ray of speech.

We take the x-ray while we show pictures and do counting.
You/your child will have to sit very still.

3. Later there will be a discussion in Clinic 7 with the surgeon and speech and language therapists to discuss if there is any way the surgeon can help. Sometimes we also offer an appointment with one of the clinical psychologists or a hearing test.

Please Note
The timetable is tight and our X-ray slots are limited, so please try to arrive promptly.

- You may also need to allow some time to park.
- We usually have five to six families going through this process on the day, so there is some time to wait between each appointment.
- We try our hardest to run to time in discussions, but sometimes they take longer than expected – please bring entertainment with you!
- If you take your clinic letter to the main hospital reception at the end of the day, you will be given a discounted parking ticket.

What might happen after PIC?
At PIC there may be a variety of outcomes.

1. **Watchful waiting**
   We may decide to use the investigation as a baseline and monitor progress to see if growth and maturation have any effect over time.

2. **Speech and Language Therapy**
   We may offer speech and language therapy to see if changes can be made to speech with therapy input.

3. **Surgery**
   An operation to the palate or throat may be offered to help improve speech.

4. **A combination of the above.**

5. **A written summary**
One of the therapists will be typing during the discussion. As you leave you will be given a ‘Consultation Record’ which summarises what we observed, what we recommend and what action we agreed with you.

Contacts/Further information

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Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.info@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.

Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

Document history

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