



Weill Cornell Medicine

July Is **Cleft** and **Craniofacial Awareness** and **Prevention Month**



Around 7,000 babies a year are born in the U.S. with a cleft lip or palate.

That's 1 in every 600 babies.

Babies can be born with a cleft lip or palate on **one or both sides of the mouth.**

Some babies have **cleft lips**, some have **cleft palates**, and some **have both.**

A cleft lip can have a **small gap** or a **large one all the way to the nose.**

A cleft palate is **a hole or gap in the roof of the mouth** that often opens into the nasal cavity.



Risk factors for having a baby with a cleft lip or palate:

- Family history of the condition
- Having diabetes
- Using alcohol, certain medications or tobacco during pregnancy

Cleft lips can be diagnosed with an ultrasound during pregnancy.



Cleft lips and palates usually cause problems with breastfeeding and eating. Most babies will need a special type of bottle to prevent malnourishment.



Some babies will experience breathing or hearing problems.



Children with cleft lips or palates may need:

- Dental care
- Hearing aids
- Orthodontics
- Speech therapy
- Surgery

Surgery to repair a cleft lip or palate usually happens when a child is under 18 months old.



To learn more about cleft and craniofacial care at Weill Cornell Medicine, please visit: <https://weillcornell.org/services/ent/pediatric-otolaryngology-program>



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