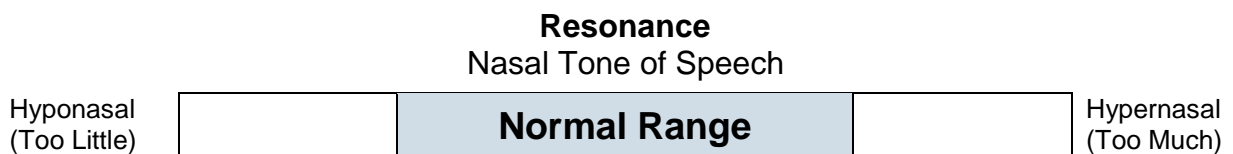


Pharyngeal flap surgery

Why does my child need pharyngeal flap surgery?

Your child needs pharyngeal flap surgery because of too much nasal tone in his or her speech. This is called hypernasal speech. Hypernasal speech happens when the muscles at the back of the throat and the soft palate are not working well and are letting air leak into the nose while speaking.

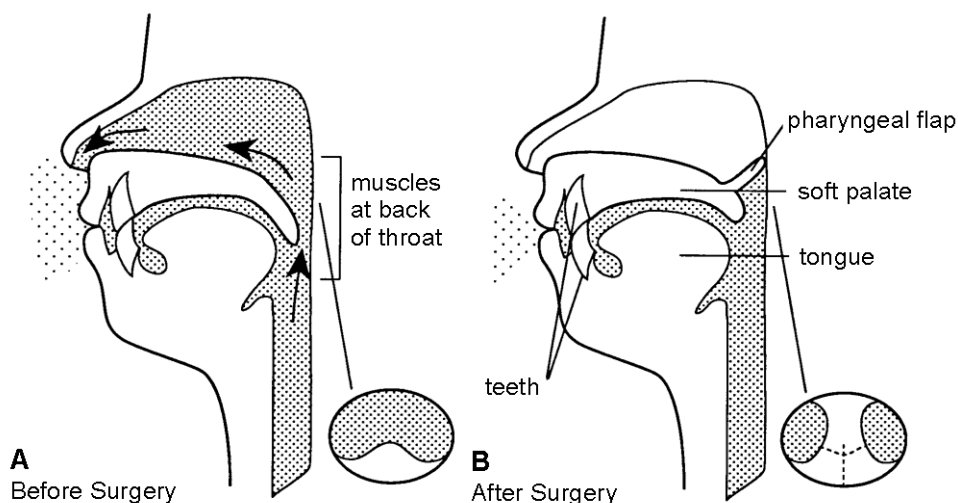
Another name for pharyngeal flap surgery is a pharyngoplasty. Parents should make the decision to have this surgery with a speech pathologist and a plastic surgeon.



What is done during pharyngeal flap surgery?

Pharyngeal flap surgery makes it easier for the muscles to stop the air from getting into the nose while speaking. A flap of muscle is taken from the back wall of the throat and is attached to the soft palate.

It looks like a bridge, making the large space at the back of the throat into two smaller spaces. Please see the before and after surgery diagrams below.



While your child is in the hospital

Here are some general guidelines about your child's stay in the hospital. The care your child gets may be a little different depending on your child's needs. Ask your surgeon for more details.

Before surgery

- Your child will usually be admitted to hospital the same day as the surgery. In most cases, you will be able to stay with your child.

During surgery

- Your child will have a general anesthetic for the operation. The operation is usually 1 ½ to 2 hours long.

After surgery

- When your child wakes up, he or she will have a sore throat. Your child may also have a sore neck. Your doctor will order pain medicine for this.
- There may be some blood in your child's mouth and nose and this is normal.
- You may be able to see the stitches along the roof of your child's mouth. These stitches will be absorbed. You probably won't be able to see the flap or bridge.
- Your child will stay in hospital until he or she is able to drink easily. This may take from 1 to 4 days.

Food restrictions

It is important that your child eat only pureed or soft foods for two weeks after surgery. This is so that hard or rough pieces of food can't hurt the stitches during healing.

- Pureed foods are foods that have been blended into a liquid or soft paste. Examples of pureed food include smoothies, yogurt and apple sauce.
- Examples of soft foods include well-cooked pasta, scrambled eggs and pancakes.

Mouth care

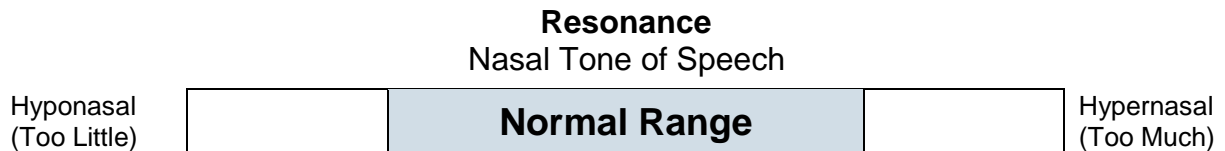
Your child may have 'bad breath'. This is normal and will go away when the flap has healed. Your child can use a small amount of water or salt water to rinse his or her mouth after eating or drinking. Continue to gently brush your child's teeth.

What you can expect when your child leaves the hospital

Your child's speech

As there is swelling after the surgery for a few weeks the speech result should not be judged right away.

At first, your child's speech may sound hyponasal or have too little nasal tone. Your child might sound like he or she has a cold. This should disappear over the next few months.



Your child may begin to snore at night. This can be very loud at first. It should become quieter over the next few months. Some children snore up to a year or more after the surgery.

The surgery should lessen the nasal tone or hypernasality of your child's speech. This happens in most cases but cannot be guaranteed. Your child may need to learn how to use the flap, with speech therapy.

The surgery will not change the way your child articulates. Articulates means how your child moves his or her tongue and lips to make letters or speech sounds.

Speech therapy

If your child needed speech therapy for sounds before the surgery, then he or she will still need speech therapy after surgery.

If speech therapy is needed, it can begin as soon as your child is feeling better. This is usually within 2 weeks. If speech therapy is not needed, a reassessment is scheduled for 1 to 3 months after the surgery.


Follow-up appointments

Plastic Surgeon

The plastic surgeon needs to see your child in 2 weeks and again at 3 months after surgery.


Your first appointment will be made for you before you leave the hospital.

If you have any questions about the surgery, please call Dr. Strumas' office:

 905-521-2100, ext. 73594

Speech Pathologist

The speech pathologist at the VPI Clinic needs to see your child 1 to 3 months after surgery. This varies depending on your child's treatment needs.

 Christina Mellies
905-521-2100 ext. 77207

 Brenda Murphy-Anderson
905-521-2100 ext. 77237

Notes
