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*Information for You from Your Health Care Team*

## **Gastro Esophageal Reflux Disease Surgery**

### **What is it?**

A Nissen fundoplication (fun-doe-plei-k-shun) is a type of surgery that corrects gastroesophageal reflux (gas-tro-e-sof-uh-g-ull) or GERD. During surgery, the doctor wraps the upper part of your child's stomach around the bottom of the esophagus creating a band of muscle that prevents reflux.

### **How is the surgery done?**

- Laparoscopic surgery is done using a tiny camera that sees inside the body. The doctor makes 3 to 5 tiny incisions (cuts in the skin) about the width of your pinky finger.
- Surgery may also be done through an open incision fundoplication in which the doctor sees inside the body through one incision about the length of a crayon.

### **What can I expect after surgery?**

**If your child has a laparoscopic fundoplication**, there will be thin pieces of white tape called steri-strips covering the incisions. The steri-strips hold the skin together while the incisions heal. The stitches are placed under the skin and do not need to be removed. They will dissolve on their own.

**If your child has an open incision fundoplication**, there will be one incision with steri-strips and a gauze bandage over the site. The stitches will dissolve on their own. Your child may also have a naso-gastric tube placed through the nose and into the stomach. This tube removes gas and acids from the stomach to protect the incision and stitches.

## How will pain be controlled after surgery?

- Deep breathing, relaxation, holding, and rocking your child can help with pain.
- Distracting your child with music, games, or videos can also help.
- Pain medicine is available. Let your nurse know as soon as your child has pain.
- At first your child will be given pain medicine through the IV. Once your child is able to eat and drink, he or she can have pain medicine by mouth.
- The doctor may prescribe a stool softener to prevent constipation while your child is taking pain medicine.

## When can my child eat?

Your child can start eating when stomach growls are heard through a stethoscope and your child begins to pass gas. Start with sips of clear fluids such as water, apple juice, Jell-O, broth, or popsicles. Your child's diet will be slowly advanced to solid foods such as scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes with gravy, and skinless chicken or fish. Foods must be soft and moist to prevent trouble swallowing. Your nurse will tell you what foods are ok to eat.

Your child may have a sore throat or trouble swallowing after surgery. This is normal. While the body is healing, your child will need to follow special rules. **If the guidelines are not followed**, food can get stuck in the throat and cause gagging, vomiting, and pain.

### DO

- Eat small, frequent meals
- Chew slowly and chew well
- Drink 1 to 2 ounces at a time
- Stop eating when you first start to feel full
- Sit upright for 15 to 60 minutes after eating

### DO NOT

- Eat fresh fruits or raw vegetables
- Eat fried or spicy foods
- Eat 2 to 3 hours before bed
- Chew gum/drink through a straw
- Drink carbonated drinks
- Drink frozen drinks

## **How do I care for my child at home?**

Your child can go home once he or she is drinking and eating without problems and pain is controlled by oral pain medicine. Bathe your child daily and clean the surgery sites gently with soap and water. Pat the steri-strips dry. It is ok to get the steri-strips wet, but they should not stay under water. This can cause the steri-strips to fall off and the surgery sites to open. You can remove the steri-strips in 7 to 10 days if they do not fall off on their own.

## **When should I call the doctor?**

Call right away if your child has any:

- Signs of infection such as:
  - Redness, warmth, drainage, pain at the surgery sites, or a temperature of 101 degrees or more
- Trouble swallowing that does not go away within 2 to 3 weeks
- Frequent nausea and vomiting
- Severe swelling of the belly
- Pain that does not go away

**SPEAK UP** if your child or you have any questions about anything, including pain control.