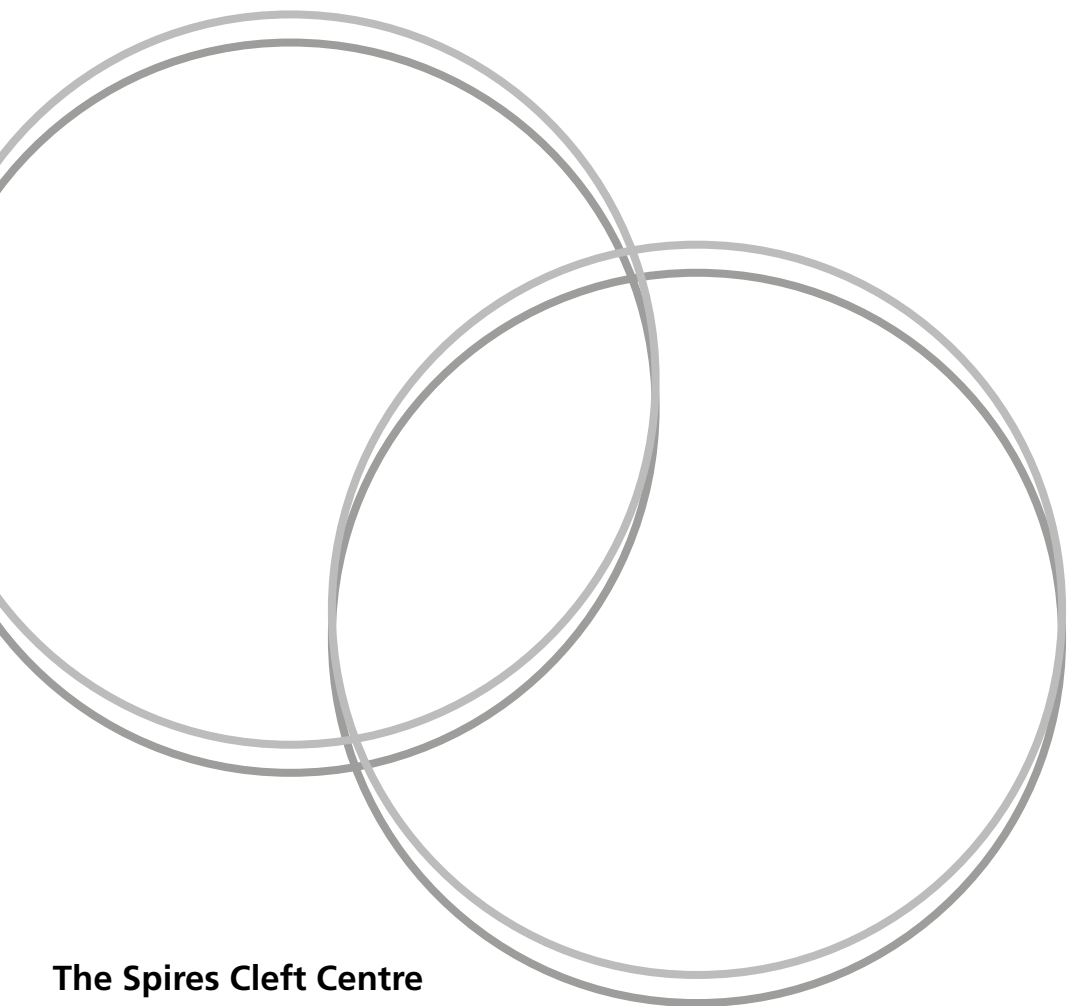




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Questions and Staring

Guide for children and young people



The Spires Cleft Centre

Dealing with questions

People often ask questions about things they've not seen before because they are curious – they are not usually trying to upset you. We are all curious about what we see around us! Having a plan ready will make you feel more confident and able to cope if someone does ask you a question.

Below are some ideas that may help you deal with the questions. You might like to practice some with a friend or someone in your family. This will help you test out which feel best for you, and you might decide to say or do different things in different situations. Practicing will also help you feel and act confidently. This will help the other person feel more relaxed too, and realise that having a cleft is 'no big deal'. Then you can get on with the important stuff of getting to know them!

Try reassuring them that having a cleft isn't a big problem:

"It's just the way my lip is, it's ok, it doesn't hurt."

*"You've noticed my scar – I had an operation,
but I'm fine now"*

Try changing the subject:

*"It's the way my nose is.
Did you watch the match last night?"*

*"It's called a cleft lip. I had an operation when I was a baby.
Have you ever had an operation?"*

*"I had an operation when I was a baby, but I can still play *football.
Do you play *football?" (*or ballet, swimming, etc.)*

Coping with staring

For the same reason that people ask questions, they may also stare. Sometimes we all get caught out staring! It might be useful for you to think of staring as a question that someone wants to ask but doesn't know how. They are probably staring because they have never seen a cleft before.

Just like when people ask questions, having a plan ready can really help.

It may be that you want to ignore them. In this case:

- Walk away
- Turn your body away
- Look away

You might want to let them know that you have seen them staring, and that you want them to stop. So try:

- Looking at them and smiling or nodding

or saying

- "I'd prefer it if you didn't stare at me."

It might be that this person looks friendly and you want to talk to them. Try answering that 'unasked question' about your cleft and start a chat. For example:

- "It's called a cleft lip, have you not seen one before?"
- "My nose is weird; it's cool to be weird, what's your weird thing?"

How to contact us

The Spires Cleft Centre

Level LG1, Children's Hospital
John Radcliffe Hospital
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www.spirescentre.nhs.uk

Tel: **01865 234 252**

Further information

You may find the following websites helpful:

www.changingfaces.org.uk

www.clapa.com

How can I give feedback about my experience?

We would like to hear about your experience with our Childrens Services. There are different ways to feedback to us:

Online: **www.ouh.nhs.uk/patient-guide/feedback/childrens-feedback.aspx**

Email: **childrens.patientexperience@ouh.nhs.uk**

Or ask for a paper survey to fill in.

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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