What is the Speech Investigation Clinic?

The Speech Investigation Clinic helps people who have difficulties with their speech because of the movement or the structure of their soft palate.

Picture 1 shows that for many speech sounds, the soft palate should seal against the back of the throat. This stops air from passing into the nose so you can build up pressure in your mouth to produce clear sounds.

If your palate is not working well, it sounds as if you are “talking through your nose” (nasal speech). The speech sounds you produce may be limited or unclear.

In this situation, you will be asked to come along to the Speech Investigation Clinic to look at your palate in more detail.

Where is the clinic?

The clinic is held in a specially equipped room in the Speech and Language Therapy Department at Salisbury District Hospital.

Who will be there?

A team of professionals will be present in the room for your investigation. They include:

Consultant Plastic Surgeon  Mr M Cadier

The Spires Cleft Centre
01722 345571
Speech and Language Therapist     Mrs G Phippen
and other Speech and Language Therapists from the Spires Cleft Team.
A Radiographer.

What is involved in an investigation?
Your appointment will last about 30 minutes. You can eat and drink as normal and will be awake and sitting in a chair.
You will be asked to repeat sounds and sentences during each part of the three parts of the investigation.
Part 1     Speech Assessment Recording.
Part 2     Videofluoroscopy – an X-ray of the side of the palate (as on picture 1) will be taken, with the picture recorded onto videotape.
Part 3     Nasendoscopy – a spray anaesthetic will be used to numb your nose and a small flexible telescope with a light will be passed through one nostril to the back of your nose. This will give a view of your palate from above. This can be uncomfortable but a local anaesthetic is always offered and the you can stop the procedure at any time.
A nasendoscopy is not always done, but it does give very useful information to help us plan for the best course of action.
If a parent/partner or friend comes with you to the hospital, they will usually be asked to wait outside during the investigation. A video of the findings will be played to you immediately afterwards.

What happens after the investigations are finished?
We will discuss the results and possible courses of action with you at the appointment. These may be:

1. Surgery
If we can see that the movement and structure of your palate and throat is not sufficient to close the nose off from the mouth, surgery may be offered to correct this.

2. Speech/Language Therapy
If we find there is no structural problem with your palate and throat, but you need to learn to control the palate movement when you are speaking, and, you need to make and use speech sounds more accurately, speech/language therapy may be offered to improve your speech.

3. No further action is needed

What happens next?
If surgery or therapy is recommended, we will see you again after it has been completed, to check the situation.
It is always possible to be seen again in the Speech Investigation Clinic if you continue to have problems.

If during your appointment, a nasendoscopy has been done, the effect of the anaesthetic usually lasts about 30 minutes so care should be taken with hot/cold food and drink during this time. There may be some slight discomfort felt in the nose after the procedure but this is usually short-lived.

**How can I get more information?**

You can contact one of the Specialist Speech and Language Team at Salisbury District Hospital on: 01722 345571.

Please also see the Spires website [www.spirescentre.nhs.uk](http://www.spirescentre.nhs.uk)