

MidDay

DELHI'S PINKI WILL SMILE TOO

Three-month-old girl from Palam with cleft lip operated upon. Parents, doc hope she will be fine soon

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THREE-month-old Dimpy isn't aware who Pinki Sonkar is. But she shares the Oscar-winning girl's story. Born with a cleft lip just like the *Smile Pinki* documentary's star, Dimpy was operated upon at Sir Gangaram Hospital on Saturday. And the little girl is already showing signs of improvement.

Dimpy's parents Brij Mohan and Ruchi Gupta, residents of Palam, were anxious that the deformed lip would make their daughter a butt of jokes and ridicule. "Now we can heave a sigh of relief. Her stitches are to be removed on Friday and we are eagerly waiting to see her smile. We want to take her home as soon as possible," said the visibly excited couple. "We are happy. Dimpy will lead a normal life like other children."

Better still, Dimpy's smile came free of cost, thanks to the NGO Smile Train.

"Lip deformity is curable. And success rate is almost 100 per cent in such surgeries. About a month ago, a 16-month-baby, Kelsang Dolma, from Tibet, underwent a series of operations and the results were quite positive. According to a survey, there are around 35,000 new cleft lip cases every day," said



HOPE OF HAPPINESS: Dimpy before the surgery PIC/MID DAY

Dr Rakesh Khazanchi, chairman, Plastic Surgery, Sir Gangaram Hospital.

Experts, however, say that more than the physical deformity, parents are scared of the social stigma attached to it. Dr Sunil Chowdhary, heading the plastic surgery department at Max Hospital, Saket, said that if a child has this problem, it doesn't mean he or she is mentally unsound. "Around 1,10,700 babies all over the world suffer from this problem," Chowdhary said.

DocSpeak

- Cleft lip is formed at the top of the lip as either a small gap or an indentation in the lip (partial or incomplete cleft) or continues into the nose (complete cleft).
- Lip cleft can be one-sided (unilateral) or two-sided (bilateral).
- A similar problem is cleft palate. This is a condition in which the two plates of the skull that form the hard palate (roof of the mouth) are not completely joined.
- Cleft lip and palate are curable. However, the kind of treatment depends on the type and severity of the cleft.
- Mostly these problems are caused by nutritional deficiency. Doctors say that such cases occur when pregnant women don't take their folic acid pills regularly.