

Elise's Journey

By Melissa Wigley



The Wigley Family, October 2019



August 2020 following Elise's surgery 1

We first found out that Elise was going to be born with a unilateral left cleft lip (and most likely a cleft palate) at the 20 week scan I had when I was pregnant with her. It was a bit of a shock to find out. When she was born she was healthy and strong, and we were lucky enough to receive a newborn pack from CleftPALS. These packs are full of amazing resources for parents who have newborn cleft babies. We were lucky that Elise took to feeding from the Pigeon bottle that was in our pack like a champ.

She is now a happy, cheeky, strong willed and clever little 16 month old. She has gone through 2 surgeries; one to fix her lip and insert grommets when she was a little older than 6 months. The other to repair her palate when she was 11 months old. She still has a hole in her palate as the original gap was too wide to close. This will be closed when she has her top gum line repaired at around 8 years old.

Elise's cleft journey is not over yet. She will have a bone graft taken from her hip/knee to fill in the gap in her gum and help the adult tooth in that area come down. Elise will also have orthodontic work done as her teeth may not (and have not) come through as a cleft-free child's teeth does. She may also have rhinoplasty as the foundation to her nose was not formed correctly making her nose lopsided. She will have ongoing speech therapy and hearing tests until her speech and hearing are clear.

The next step for Elise is speech therapy which I'm sure she will thrive in. For now, we are just enjoying the crazy happy little girl that she is. I feel very lucky and blessed to be working for such a generous organisation.