



Tongue-tie release: Frenotomy

TONGUE-TIE RELEASE

A frenotomy is a procedure commonly used to treat tongue-tie. This procedure is performed by a doctor, and involves using a pair of sterile scissors to snip the thin membrane under the tongue, releasing the tongue so that it can move more freely.

There is usually very little bleeding and minimal complications with a frenotomy, as long as the baby has already had their vitamin K injection or at least two doses of oral vitamin K. Serious complications are rare.

The baby can breastfeed immediately after the procedure. Many mothers will notice an immediate difference in how well their baby feeds and a reduction in pain during the feed. Other babies may take one or two weeks to work out how to use their newly freed tongue and may continue to require support from a lactation consultant during this time.

There is no special care required following the procedure. Occasionally, during the healing process a small white patch may be seen under the tongue of some babies. This is normal and should resolve within two weeks of the release.

FOLLOWING THE PROCEDURE

Immediately following the procedure, you will have a lactation consultant appointment where latch and feeding will be assessed. You will be asked to stay in the clinic for 30 minutes following the procedure for this consultation.

If needed the lactation consultant will arrange further follow up appointments in the clinic following your baby's tongue tie release for ongoing breastfeeding support.

If you have any concerns following the procedure, please contact your lactation consultant, maternal and child health nurse, paediatrician or your local doctor.

SUCKING AND STRETCHING EXERCISES

It's important to remember to show your child that not everything you are going to do to the mouth is associated with annoyance with the exercises.

Additionally, babies can have disorganised or weak sucking patterns that can benefit from exercises. The following exercises are simple and can be done to improve suck quality.

Some parents like to do these exercises before the stretching session and spend 30–45 seconds on each exercise prior to the wound stretches (no need to do these sucking exercises during your night time stretch).

1. Slowly rub the lower gumline from side to side and your baby's tongue will follow your finger. This will help strengthen the lateral movements of the tongue.
2. Let your child suck on your finger and do a tug-of-war, slowly trying to pull your finger out while they try to suck it back in. This strengthens the tongue itself.
3. Let your child suck your finger and apply gentle pressure to the roof of the mouth. Once the baby starts to suck on your finger, just press down with the back of your nail into the tongue. This usually interrupts the sucking motion while the baby pushes back against you. Listen for a seal break and then put your finger back up into the palate to re-stimulate sucking. Repeat as tolerated.
4. With one index finger inside the baby's cheek, use your thumb outside the cheek to massage the cheeks on either side to help lessen the tension.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND ADVICE:

Lactation Consultant Phone: 0447 124 854
(Tuesday and Friday)

Urgent Care Phone: 5471 3514

Maternal & Child Health Line (24 hours)
Phone: 13 22 29

Australian Breastfeeding Association – Breastfeeding Helpline – 1800 686 268

www.breastfeeding.asn.au