

Tongue Tie Release

Post-operative Information

What is tongue-tie?

- Everyone has a small band of tissue (frenulum) that attaches from the undersurface of the front part of tongue to the floor of the mouth. When this band is very short it can limit the natural movement of the tongue and is called a tongue-tie. It occurs in 1 in 20 babies and is more common in boys.
- If your baby has a tongue-tie, this may sometimes cause breastfeeding problems. These problems include difficulty with latching and persistent nipple pain. A tongue-tie may interestingly cause no problems at all. If it is very thick and markedly short, it can limit your baby's ability to push its tongue out, lick its lips and may affect its speech development later in life. These severe tongue-ties are rare.

Releasing or repairing a tongue-tie (frenotomy)

- Your paediatrician and lactation consultant may have diagnosed a tongue-tie due to problems you may have with breastfeeding, latching and nipple pain. The release of the tongue-tie is a very simple, almost painless procedure that takes a few seconds. Complications are rare. A tiny amount of local anesthetic is sprayed in your baby's mouth and the tongue tie is released with a sharp scissors.
- You are able to breastfeed immediately afterwards and your baby will not feel any discomfort. As a neonate this procedure is done under local anesthetic in the ward or doctor's rooms but when your baby is older than 3 months, will require a general anesthetic.

What to do after a tongue-tie

- As with all medical procedures, there are always different opinions. Some believe that massaging the floor of the mouth under the tongue before each feed prevents the tongue-tie from re-attaching or developing, whereas others feel that this exercise is not necessary. A reoccurrence of a tongue-tie is rare.

Classification of tongue-tie and should we have it released?

- Tongue-ties are graded as mild, moderate and severe and the fibrous band is either thick or thin.
- If your paediatrician and lactation consultant have recommended a frenotomy, I strongly advise you to consider their advice. Bear in mind that you may hear conflicting advice because there are some people who believe that this procedure is totally unnecessary.

Complications

- These are extremely rare. Immediately after the procedure, you may notice a tiny bit of blood in your baby's mouth. This is normal.
- If you are concerned about any problem related to the procedure, please contact me immediately.