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Frenotomy (cutting a tongue tie)

What should I expect after the procedure?

This procedure is typically done on newborn infants in the first week or so of life. At this age, they rarely have any prolonged discomfort, beyond the short time that the procedure actually takes. I have found that their crying after the release is very brief, similar to that seen after a shot or blood drawing, and that injecting local anesthesia makes their discomfort much worse. While babies in general have fussy periods, crying during the week after frenotomy is generally no more frequent than without the procedure. Pain medication is generally not necessary, and doesn't seem to make any difference in their overall mood. Of course, if there is any concern, I am always happy to see your child at any time.

When can I feed my baby after the procedure?

Nursing or bottle feeding may be done immediately. It soothes the baby, and will help stop any minor bleeding.

What do I need to do after the procedure?

The following is **very important** to ensure good healing and to prevent recurrence of the tongue tie. A wound in the body will eventually heal by "contraction" – a normal process that pulls the edges together. Our goal is to mold the tissue of the floor of the mouth so that it heals flatter with better tongue extension. There will **always** be a small band under the tongue where the lining of the mouth heals, but by doing this massage for **two weeks** after frenotomy you will get a much better result.

Gloves aren't necessary – just wash your hands before and after - but if you prefer, you can use them. Some people use a little coconut oil on their fingers to make it easier.

If you look under the tongue, you will see a diamond shaped opening where the tongue tie was cut (drawn onto picture #1). This is the area that has to heal. Over time you will see some yellow or white material in this area (picture #3). This is the scab, it is a normal part of the healing process. It is **not** an infection or thrush, it does not require antibiotics or any other medication, but contact me if you have any questions.

The massage is done by touching the tips of your index fingers together, and pushing firmly on the diamond area. You then lift the tongue by pushing your fingers **up toward the roof of the mouth while holding pressure**. It's important to **keep your fingertips together** as in picture #2, so that you stretch the area (don't let them slip to the sides). You won't injure the baby by doing this, but they may be fussy. Don't be afraid to apply some pressure to get a good stretch.

This massage should be done at least 3 times a day for about 10-15 seconds each time, pausing at the end of the stretch with the tongue lifted up. Don't worry if you don't follow that schedule exactly, but do your best to do this during the healing process over the first two weeks. **To see a video of this** on my website, scroll to the bottom of the page at kidsent.com/frenotomy or use this QR code. ----->

You can also help your baby improve their sucking by having them do exercises during this healing period. Place your finger in their mouth and let them suck on it. Then slowly pull it out, letting them pull against you (like a tug of war game!). This strengthens the tongue and lips, and will improve feeding in general.

What about follow up?

The follow up visit is in 3 weeks, please call for an appointment, or make one online through the website on the top of this page. While you are welcome to come to my office, usually a telemedicine visit by FaceTime or other video conferencing method is adequate.

