

## Patient information factsheet

# Frenulotomy (tongue-tie release) aftercare advice

We have given you this factsheet because your baby has had a frenulotomy (a procedure to release tongue-tie). It explains what to expect after the procedure and how to care for your baby. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to your midwife, health visitor or a member of our infant feeding team.

### Pain relief

Some babies, particularly those over three months of age, may be unsettled for a couple of days after a frenulotomy. Cuddling, baby massage and feeding will all help, but some babies may need pain relief medication. If your baby is over eight weeks old, you can use an age appropriate paracetamol. If your baby is younger than eight weeks old, you should discuss this with your general practitioner (GP) or paediatrician (a doctor who looks after babies).

### Healing

The mouth heals very quickly, aided by breast milk and saliva. You should give your baby frequent feeds for the next few days. This will help the healing process and soothe the area.

After the frenulotomy, you may notice a pink diamond-shaped wound under your baby's tongue. A few days after the frenulotomy, a small white or yellow blister may appear. If your baby has jaundice (a common condition in newborn babies that causes yellowing of the skin), the wound may look bright yellow or orange. This is painless and should not interfere with feeding. It may take a few weeks for the blister to disappear completely.

You should make an urgent appointment with your midwife or GP if your baby:

- has a swollen, red and inflamed wound
- has a high temperature (38°C or above)
- is reluctant to feed
- is sleepy or irritable

If you are using feeding equipment such as bottles, teats and dummies, please take extra care when sterilising and making up bottles.

### Scar tissue

Approximately 4% of babies (four in every 100) will form scar tissue on the wound and this can have the same effect on feeding as the tongue-tie did. If your baby is feeding less in the two to three week period after the frenulotomy, you should contact your health visitor for advice.

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You may notice your baby moving their tongue around much more after the frenulotomy. Playing games to encourage your baby to stick their tongue out, move it from side to side and up and down may help prevent scar tissue forming. For more information, please read the 'Frenulotomy (tongue-tie release) exercises' factsheet. We will give you a copy of this factsheet at the time of the frenulotomy, but you can also download it from our website: [www.uhs.nhs.uk/maternity](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/maternity)

## Bleeding

Any bleeding should have stopped by the time your baby has had a feed. We will check this before you go home. Further bleeding after the frenulotomy is unusual but can sometimes happen. You can stop the bleeding by feeding your baby, as this will compress the wound area.

If the bleeding continues, you can put firm pressure on the bleed with your finger and a clean gauze or cloth for five to ten minutes. Keep your baby upright and do not keep checking the wound during this time. If you are still worried, go to your nearest hospital emergency department. Remember to take your personal child health record (red book) with you.

If your baby swallows some blood after the frenulotomy, you may see flecks of blood in your baby's vomit or poo. This is nothing to be concerned about.

## Ongoing support

You may notice that your baby's feeding technique improves immediately after the frenulotomy, but for most babies, it can take a while. You and your baby will have been managing for some time with restricted tongue movement, so you will both need time to get used to your baby's tongue becoming more mobile. Your nipples may also be sore, so you will need time to heal too.

## Contact us

If you and your baby are being cared for by Southampton midwifery or health visiting services and you need feeding support or advice about your baby's tongue-tie, frenulotomy or the exercises recommended for your baby, please contact:

### Maternity infant feeding team

Telephone: **07786 267584**

If the team are unable to answer your call, please leave a voicemail with your name, number and a short message, and a member of the team will aim to get back to you within 48 hours.

### Community midwifery co-ordinator

Telephone: **023 8120 4871** (Monday to Sunday, 8am to 5pm)

### Broadlands Birth Centre

Telephone: **023 8120 6012** (out of hours)

**Your health visitor** (use the contact details you have been given)

If you and your baby are being cared for by a midwifery or health visiting team outside of Southampton, please speak to your midwife, health visitor or GP, and ask for more information about support services in your area.

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## Useful links

[www.uhs.nhs.uk/departments/maternity-services/feeding-your-baby](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/departments/maternity-services/feeding-your-baby)

[www.uhs.nhs.uk/departments/maternity-services/feeding-your-baby/tongue-tie](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/departments/maternity-services/feeding-your-baby/tongue-tie)

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**

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