

# Tongue/Lip Tie and Breastfeeding

## Tongue Tie

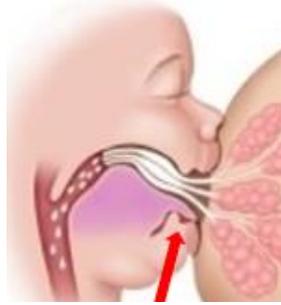
- Many people do not have a frenulum, or membrane, under their tongue.
- If a frenulum is present, it usually stretches over time and doesn't affect speech.
- A tight frenulum sometimes interferes with latching, which might result in pain and trauma to the nipple.
- Before considering a procedure to clip the tongue tie, ask a lactation expert for help. Better positioning and technique can often compensate enough to avoid the need for a procedure.
- If technique is perfected but latch pain persists, you might decide that the potential benefits of frenotomy may outweigh the minimal risks of this minor procedure.
- Sometimes eliminating that possibility from the equation can simply help you move on.

## The Procedure, Risks and Benefits

- The risks of frenotomy (clipping) include excessive bleeding and infection, but both are very rare.
- A potential risk is that scar formation at the site of clipping may create tightness, thus "undoing" the possible benefit of the procedure.
- An instrument is used to lift the baby's tongue and a sterile scissors is used to clip the frenulum.
- Bleeding is stopped by applying gauze and pressure under the tongue.
- Put baby to breast within a few minutes.
- Sometimes the latch is better immediately, or it may take a while to notice a difference. Or it may not help at all.
- Extremely rarely, a previously nursing baby may refuse to nurse, but usually only briefly.

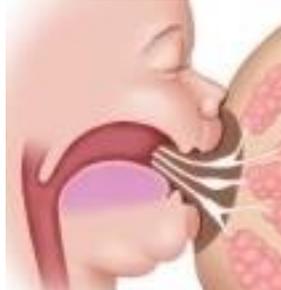
## Upper Lip Tie

- There is no evidence that clipping an upper lip tie will make a difference with latching.
- It is possible that this membrane can affect how the lips "seal" during latching, but the potential risk of interfering with future orthodontics is too great to warrant clipping this membrane.
- A "lip tie" which causes a gap between the 2 front teeth may require a procedure during orthodontic care as an older child.



## NO tongue tie

The tongue goes up and over the bottom gum and thus strokes on the breast tissue and not the nipple.



## Tongue Tie

A tight membrane "ties" the tongue to the floor of the mouth so the tongue can't move up and over the bottom gum.



Frenulum extends to the tip of the tongue and creates a "heart shape" when baby tries to lift the tongue.



Frenulum extends halfway to the tip of the tongue



Tight frenulum causes the tongue to "cup."