

Tongue-tie division – active wound management factsheet

Information for parents

This sheet aims to provide you with information about active wound management after your child's frenulotomy procedure to separate a tongue-tie. If you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the team caring for you. It is supplementary to our [Tongue-tie division leaflet](#).

Active wound management

To help the wound heal and try to prevent the tongue-tie coming back, you can prompt your baby to move their tongue using simple exercises and performing gentle sweeps and stretches under your baby's tongue. Do these 3 to 4 times a day, for about 4 to 6 weeks. If your baby finds the exercises uncomfortable, stop them and/or choose the exercises which do not involve contact with the wound.

1. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds before performing the exercises.
2. You can perform these exercises at any time. Do them at different times during the day. Avoid doing them regularly before or after feeding, so your baby does not associate them with feeding and refuse to feed as a result.
3. Place your baby in a comfortable position on a changing table, a soft surface, your lap, or hold them in your arms.
4. Gently hold their head in the palm of one hand, placing your thumb on one ear and your smallest finger on the other ear. Or, if holding them in your arms, place their head in your elbow pit.
5. On the evening of the procedure, sweep a clean finger under your baby's tongue to check how it feels after the tongue-tie division. This will also help you to recognise if the tongue-tie is coming back.
6. From the day after the procedure, try these exercises 3 to 4 times a day. It will take 2 to 5 minutes to complete them. Make this moment playful by singing a nursery rhyme or making funny noises with your baby.
7. Softly stroke your baby's lips with your index finger (the finger next to your thumb). Then tap their top lip and wait for them to open their mouth.
8. Gently touch and massage the tip of your baby's tongue and lower lip with your finger to encourage them to extend their tongue towards and over their lower lip 5 to 6 times.

You may find it helpful to poke your tongue out at the same time to encourage your baby to copy you.

9. Use the pad of your index finger to massage your baby's lower gums from side to side and towards the back 5 to 6 times, to encourage lateral movement of the tongue.
10. Place your index finger in your baby's mouth and gently press the pad of your finger against the roof of the mouth, to start a sucking reflex. Once the baby starts sucking your finger, gently try to pull it out of their mouth, until they nearly let go, and then allow them to suck your finger back into their mouth. Repeat for up to 2 minutes, or until your baby allows.
11. For babies with an oversensitive gag reflex, gently touch the roof of their mouth (their palate) and stroke it from side to side. If your baby gags, stop and start again from behind the upper gums along the hard palate. You may need to gradually build up to this exercise.
12. With your free hand, place your clean thumb under your baby's chin and your index finger as far as possible under their tongue. Gently sweep your finger under their tongue 2 to 3 times. Placing your index finger horizontally in front of your baby's mouth (like a pretend toothbrush) and then under their tongue, use the pad of your index finger to apply gentle pressure directly on the wound or scar. Stretch it in an upwards and downwards movement for up to 5 seconds or as long as baby allows. If your baby starts crying, take your finger out of their mouth and cuddle them. You will be able to try the stretches at another time.

Who to contact

Contact us with queries on 020 3299 6550. For emergencies, call 111 or go to your nearest Emergency Department.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: 01689 863252

Email: kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net