

Tongue Tie in the Newborn

About Tongue Tie

The frenulum is the small piece of tissue attaching your infant's tongue to the floor of the mouth. Ankyloglossia or tongue tie is when the frenulum restricts the tongue's movement outward or upward enough that it may interfere with effective breastfeeding. It occurs in 4/100 newborns and there is often a history of the condition in other family members.

Cutting Tongue Ties

The procedure of snipping or clipping the frenulum is termed a frenotomy. The infant is swaddled, held by one of our trained nurses while the physician uses a device called a grooved tongue director to visualize the area. The frenulum is clamped for several seconds to decrease the blood flow and help numb the area (think of your arm falling asleep when you lean on it). In a matter of a second or two the tissue is then clipped with scissors. A small amount of gentle pressure is often all that is needed to stop bleeding and breastfeeding can begin right away!

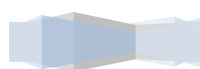
As with all procedures there are risks, but these are VERY rare and we take extra care to minimize them. In fact, in the 5 years we have offered this service in our office, we have not experienced any of these problems. Potential side effects may be: 1) excessive bleeding 2) infection to the cut site, 3) scar formation, and 4) damage to a salivary duct.

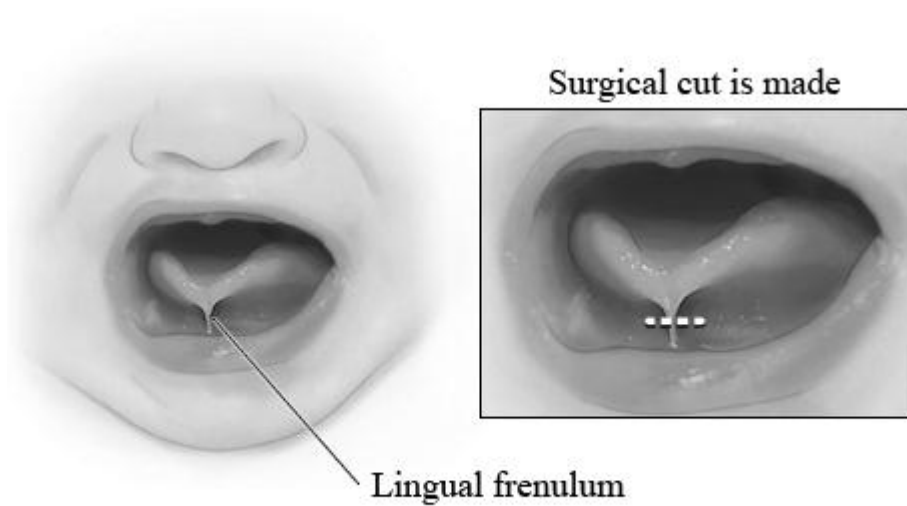
About Dr. Michael Martin

Dr. Martin is a graduate of Cornell University and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. After finishing his pediatric training at the New York University Medical Center and Bellevue Hospital, he completed a chief residency at NYU. He holds an academic position as a liaison to the pediatric residency program at Inova Fairfax Children's Hospital and holds academic positions at the University of Virginia Medical School and the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine. As part of his commitment to promoting mothers in being successful with breastfeeding, he began performing frenotomies in the office 5 years ago.

Making an Appointment

Knowing how influential tongue ties are in breastfeeding success, we offer same day appointments to those considering frenotomies. Call [703-938-5555](tel:703-938-5555).





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Resources

1. Michael S. Martin, MD , Richard H. Schwartz, MD. *Tackling ankyloglossia in the office: How to perform lingual frenotomy on newborns with ankyloglossia.* Contemporary Pediatrics January 1, 2008.
2. <http://www.tonguetieclipit.com/Introduction.html>
3. <http://www.tonguetie.co.uk/>
4. <http://www.llli.org/resources.html>
5. <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/default.aspx>

