



**HUTT** maternity  
Hutt Valley Maternity Care

## **Tongue Tie** Information for women



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## **What is it?**

The underside of the tongue is tied to the floor of the mouth by a membrane (lingual frenulum).

In a tongue-tie the membrane is short and tight. This restricts the mobility of the tongue.

## **How does this occur?**

The frenulum is a piece of tissue that was part of the facial structure of the infant during early pregnancy.

This would usually disappear or reduce to a very slight membrane which is elastic and does not limit the tongue in its movement.

Many tongue-ties cause no problems.

Research shows up to 5% of babies have some form of tongue-tie. It is more common in boys (about 60%) and there may be a family history also, usually on the father's side.

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## Difficulties Associated with Tongue-Tie

Babies with tongue-tie may have Breast feeding difficulties.

- Inability to latch adequately.
- Unable to stay fully latched.
- Poor breastmilk intake.
- Clicking sound while Breastfeeding
- Poor growth

Mothers may experience:

- Nipples being grazed and/or damaged.
- Baby slipping of the nipple.
- Pain in nipples

This may result in poor milk supply and/or early weaning.

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## **Assessment and Treatment**

Assessment is done by the Lactation Consultant following referral from staff or LMC.

The Lactation Consultant will do a thorough assessment of your baby's mouth and observe a breastfeed.

If your baby has breastfeeding difficulties due to tongue-tie the Lactation Consultant may suggest (BFSC) frenotomy.

The procedure of frenotomy is a very simple quick snip of the frenulum using sterile scissors.

Many babies don't even cry when this is performed. Following this procedure your baby will be put to the breast.

More significant tongue-ties may need further careful assessment and may require referral to another health professional specialist.

It is important to note not all tongue-ties need intervention, but all will need good lactation support. A follow on appointment may be given.

## References

Hazelbaker, AK. Tongue-Tie: Morphogenesis, Impact, Assessment and Treatment. Columbus, OH: Aidan and Eva Press, 2010

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