

What is Tongue-Tie?

An information guide



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A tongue-tie is a thin piece of skin called the frenulum that attaches the baby's tongue to the bottom of the mouth which can restrict movement of the tongue.



How can you tell your baby has a tongue tie?

Some restrictions are visible and some are not. Some restriction affect feeding and some will not affect feeding.

It is important you seek support with any feeding problems you have. With skilled support many feeding problems will be overcome. For those feeding problems that remain a referral can be sent to our service.

It is ideal that a full feed is observed so the best help can be given to you and your baby. Please contact someone for support such as your midwife, health visitor, GP or a peer support worker to help you with any of the following feeding problems:

Signs affecting breastfeeding and bottle feeding babies:

- Weight loss issues.
- Prolonged jaundice.
- Excessive wind/colic/reflux.
- Difficulty latching or staying latched to the breast or the teat.
- Restless/unsettled during/after feeds.
- Very frequent feeding/feeds that take a long time to finish.
- Clicking and / or dribbling a lot when feeding.

Signs affecting breastfeeding mothers

- Sore/cracked/bruised/misshapen/dicoloured nipples.
- Blocked ducts/engorgement/mastitis.
- Painful feeds.
- Milk supply is reducing.

Nipple shields can help to overcome breastfeeding problems, but they can also make some problems worse. If you wish to use nipple shields ask for support.

You can obtain further information from: **ABM-nipple-shields-breastfeeding.pdf**

You may wish to use a dummy with your baby. You can obtain further information from: **7-dummy-factsheet-2017-1.pdf (lullabytrust.org.uk)**

You can also receive feeding support from the National Breastfeeding helpline: **http://www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk/**

Helpline is open from 9:30am to 9:30 pm, 7 days a week

English - Telephone: 0300 100 0212

Welsh - Telephone: 0300 100 0212, option 1

Polish - Telephone: 0300 100 0212, option 2

Bengali / Sylheti - Telephone: 0300 456 2421 (if no volunteer is available please leave a message)

For help with breastfeeding and taking medications go to: **https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/drugs-factsheets/**

You can obtain some foreign language leaflets for breast and bottle feeding from: **https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/foreign-language-resources/**

Which babies can we see in our clinic?

We only see babies who have feeding problems that have not resolved with feeding support.

We are unable to see babies where parents have concerns about future problems such as with speech and language development. We are also unable to see the following babies in our clinic.

If your baby meets one or more of the following criteria a referral will be sent directly to St Mary's ENT Service by your doctor, midwife or health visitor:

- Your baby has been diagnosed or is awaiting diagnosis for a medical condition such as cardiac, neurological, chromosomal/genetic.
- Any family history of bleeding disorders such as: Haemophilia, Von Willebrand's, Platelet deficiency, FXI deficiency

We may be able to see your baby in the following circumstances if we have confirmed blood test showing baby has normal blood clotting factors:

- Excessive/easy bleeding/bruising of infant such as site of injections or heel prick tests, cephalohematoma, bleeding from umbilicus.
- Unknown family history of bleeding disorders e.g. parent is adopted, parent is not the biological parent.
- If your baby has not received vitamin K (injection at birth / 3 oral doses if breastfeeding / 2 oral doses if formula feeding)

We are also unable to see babies that have been to another NHS tongue tie service or a private tongue tie practitioner for an assessment or treatment. You will need to return to your original provider about any assessment, procedure or infant feeding queries you have.

What happens when your baby has been referred to our service?

We will contact you regarding your baby's referral to us. During this call we will confirm the details on the form and discuss the feeding problems you are encountering. Sometimes we do not offer appointments and there are many reasons for this. If we don't offer an appointment we will discuss this with you.

Sometimes we are unable to contact parents/guardians. If we have been unable to make contact we will post a letter letting you know what to do.

At the appointment a tongue tie practitioner will undertake an assessment. This assessment tells us whether we can offer the procedure or not. If we do not offer the procedure we will support you with feeding and where to seek further support.

A tongue tie practitioner will talk through the consent form with you and explain the intended benefit and the risks. All risks are very rare however we still need to inform you of them. On occasion there are restrictions that are not suitable for us to undertake the procedure in our clinic. In these cases we refer your baby to ST. Mary's ENT Service.

The procedure

Babies can be wrigglers and can get upset with us so we will swaddle them to prevent their hands going near their mouth and we hold them still during the procedure. The procedure is very quick so we ask that you are ready to feed your baby, whether that is a breast feed or from a bottle.

If you are bringing a bottle of formula we ask that you buy a ready-to-feed bottle that you can decant into baby's normal bottle and teat. This helps to ensure that your baby gets their feed at the right temperature.

After the procedure we will provide you with aftercare information.

Further information

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/IPG149>

<http://whhttps://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/support-for-parents/tongue-tie/>

www.tongue-tie.org.uk

Northern Care Alliance Tongue Tie Assessment Service is based at Royal Oldham Hospital.

We are contactable via the infant feeding team: 0161 627 8752 – please leave a message on the answer phone and we will get back to you. Please be aware we are a part time service and will deal with queries on Wednesdays and Fridays only.

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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