



London Tongue & Lip Tie Network

Post Tethered Oral Tissue Release Instructions for Infants

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call Alicia directly at (519) 709-5669.

Q. How often do we need to fully open and separate the surgical sites under the tongue and lip?

A. To start, at least 5 times a day for 3 weeks and then weaning for 4 more weeks. Opening of the surgical areas can be completed before you breastfeed or after nursing on one breast and before you nurse on the other breast.

Q. How hard do we push?

A. Gentle pressure is enough to make sure the area remains open and the surgical areas do not heal together. If you see a red line in the healing area you are not opening the surgical areas adequately as a red line means the area is healing together. Just pushing on the lateral area of the tongue is not adequate. You must open the surgical areas.

Q. How long do I push or pull the surgical sites each time we open the area?

A. Long enough to make sure the entire diamond is opened up, usually about 5-10 seconds.

Q. What if I push or pull too hard? Will this cause any damage?

A. You cannot make the surgical sites bigger or cause any damage when you stretch either the tongue or lip revisions and it is essential to a successful outcome of the procedures but it may cause more discomfort for your child.

Q. Will there be any swelling or bleeding?

A. It is not uncommon for the upper lip to swell slightly after the lip tie is revised. If this occurs, you can place a cold compress on the upper lip but don't apply ice directly to skin the surface. The white area which develops within the surgical site is normal and NOT a sign of infection. Lasers are bactericidal. A little bleeding when doing the stretching exercises is not a cause for concern. You may also wish to do your stretches with coconut oil on your finger tip as it is anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial.

Q. What other reactions are to be expected post surgical treatment?

A. Your infant may have increased drooling due to the increased tongue mobility which will stimulate salivary flow and may be fussy and out of sorts for a day or so.

Q. When should we see improvements in breastfeeding?

A. Many infants will show an improved latch on the breast immediately after surgery however in some instances this may take as long as a few weeks. Some infants may take a few days to develop a good latch as they begin to gain strength and some may need time to relearn their nursing habits. After revisions of the lip tie, you can also assist in improving the latch by pulling the upper lip outward when your infant first starts to nurse.

The following is to be done post-operatively. The day of the revision you should begin to do the stretches 2 hours following the procedure and then every 2-3 hours during waking hours. You do not have to wake your sleeping baby! Continue this protocol until your post-op appointment. Ensure clean hands or gloves.

Lip Stretches

1. “Stretch”: Place your finger under the lip and move it up as high as it will go toward the nose tip/chin, until you feel resistance. Count to 5-10 then release the lip. Repeat 3 times.
2. “Active Wound Management”: With fingertips, gently rub circular movements directly on top of the wound (3x in one direction and 3x in the other direction). Then with a rolling pin finger movement, roll side to side for several seconds, and then roll top to bottom for several seconds. Remember, the goal is to open the opposing surfaces of the lip and gum so they cannot stick together.

Tongue Stretches

1. “Stretch”: Insert both index fingers (V-shape with finger tips touching) into the mouth, dive under the tongue and pick up the posterior (“back”) part of the tongue. Then lift towards the roof of the mouth; visualize you are a forklift tractor picking up the tongue. Once you are under the tongue, pick up the posterior part of the tongue as high as it will go toward the palate. Hold it there for 3 seconds, relax, and do it again. The goal is to unfold the wound so that you can visualize the entire diamond shape. The fold across the middle of the diamond is the first place it will reattach.
2. “Active Wound Management”: With fingertips, gently rub circular movements directly on top of the wound (3x in one direction and 3x in the other direction). Then with a rolling pin finger movement, roll side to side for several seconds, and then roll top to bottom for several seconds. This will loosen up the muscles of the tongue and floor of the mouth as well as maintain the diamond as deep as possible.

Pain Management

1. Breastmilk ice chips or frozen cotton swab “popsicles”
2. Coconut oil on fingertips while performing active wound management
3. Breastfeeding on demand
4. Skin to skin baths
5. Camilia homeopathic teething drops
6. Tylenol, dosage as per weight

Your infant has a post op visit scheduled _____ to ensure the sites are healing properly. You will be instructed at that time regarding weaning the stretch protocol.

Recommended supportive therapy: _____

