Lip-Tie (Maxillary Frenum)

MILD, MODERATE OR SEVERE

- The maxillary frenum is the membrane between the lip and the gum. When it is very tight it may interfere with a baby’s ability to latch correctly on the breast, and interfere with the ability to maintain good oral hygiene and proper dental development.
- Lip-tie release may improve feeding, brushing, gum recession, spaced teeth, etc.

Tongue-Tie (Lingual Frenum)

ANKYLOGLOSSIA: MILD, MODERATE OR SEVERE

- The lingual frenum is the cord that stretches from the tongue to the floor of the mouth. If the tongue is attached too tightly to the floor of the mouth, its mobility is restricted, often causing difficulty with breastfeeding, chewing, speech, oral hygiene, etc.
- Tongue-tie release (frenectomy) may improve these problems when followed by stretching exercises and follow-up with your Lactation Consultant.

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G. Gary Demerjian, DDS

For Proper Development & Growth
Tongue-tie, (Ankyloglossia) and Lip-tie (Lip Adhesion)

Most of us think of tongue-tie as a situation we find ourselves in when we are too excited to speak. Actually, tongue-tie is the non-medical term for a relatively common physical condition that limits the use of the tongue—**ankyloglossia**. It's closely related to a similar condition called “lip-tie” where the upper lip cannot be curled or moved normally.

Before we are born, a strong cord of tissue called a **frenulum** is located in the center of the mouth to guide development of mouth structures. As we develop, the frenulum recedes and thins. The lingual (tongue) or labial (lip) frenulum is easily felt and plainly visible if you look in the mirror under your tongue and upper lip. In some children, however, the frenulum is especially tight or fails to recede and may cause problems with tongue / lip mobility.

The tongue and lip are a complex group of muscles vital to proper oral function. Tongue-tie can lead to serious nursing, eating, dental or speech problems for some individuals.

Common Symptoms of Tongue-Tie And Lip-Tie

**FOR INFANTS . . .**
- Problems latching on the mother's breast
- Colic and/or reflux symptoms
- Poor weight gain
- Inability to feed from a bottle or hold pacifier in mouth

**FOR OLDER CHILDREN . . .**
- Narrow upper jaw
- Inability to touch roof of mouth
- Difficulty moving tongue from side to side
- Inability to stick out tongue beyond the upper gums

**FOR MOMS . . .**
- Creased, flattened or blanched nipples after nursing
- Severe pain when infant attempts to latch
- Poor or incomplete breast drainage
- Mastitis or nipple thrush

The Effects Of Tongue-Tie On Your Child's Development

A new baby with a too-tight tongue and/or lip frenulum can have trouble sucking and may have poor weight gain. If they cannot make a good seal on the nipple, they may swallow air, causing gas and stomach problems. Nursing mothers who experience significant pain while nursing or whose baby has trouble latching on should have their child evaluated for tongue- and lip-tie. Although it is often overlooked, it can be an underlying cause of feeding problems that not only affect a child's weight, but lead many mothers to abandon breastfeeding altogether.

At its most basic level, not being able to latch on the mother's breast can cause the tongue and lip muscles to function differently, and may compromise proper development of the teeth and jaw. Subsequent oral complications may include bite problems (overbite and underbite), TMJ and underdeveloped jaws, narrow arches, crowded teeth, and even breathing issues such as snoring and sleep apnea.

Some older children with tongue-tie may develop slight speech impediments—difficulty articulating certain sounds may be noticed (if your three-year-old's speech is not understood outside of the immediate family circle, evaluation may be warranted). Appearance can also be affected by persistent dental problems such as a gap between the top or bottom two front teeth. The frenulum can also pull against the gingiva (gums) on the front or back of the teeth, causing recession. In addition to the aesthetic problem, this can lead to sensitivity and pain. The tight lip frenulum may trap food, plaque and other bacteria against the teeth and is a major factor in Early Childhood Caries (nursing/bottle cavities).

We use the latest progressive techniques such as lasers and electrocaudery. There is minimal discomfort, with faster healing time, no bleeding, and no sutures needed. In some cases, latching can occur immediately after the procedure.