

Frenectomy Homecare Information

This packet includes information that will help you and your little one recover as best as possible.

Please understand that sucking correctly and consistently after the procedure takes time. Improvements with feedings are usually gradual and may take anywhere from 2-4 weeks. In most cases, frenectomy alone will not cure all of the feeding problems and additional therapies may be needed. Therefore, it is critical to work with an IBCLC who has extra training in suck dysfunction in order to achieve an optimal end goal. Outcomes may vary from baby to baby

What you may expect after the procedure:

***The healing timeline below applies to most cases. Please be aware that some cases may vary.**

DAYS 1-3

- Most babies will be very sore for the first 24-48 hours
- Expect baby to be fussier than usual
- Healing "white patch" forms
- Pain meds given as indicated
- Difficulty with latch may occur
- Have "back up" feeding plan and comfort measures prepared

WEEK 1

- Baby's soreness starts to taper off days 7-10
- Baby may be fussy
- Healing white patch continues to form
- Pain meds given as needed
- Baby is re-learning how to suck
- Feedings may be inconsistent
- LC follow up is highly recommended to evaluate breastfeeding and teach suck training

WEEKS 2-4

- Baby should not be sore but exercises are mildly irritating
- Healing white patch shrinking
- Pain meds not necessary
- New frenulum forming
- Bodywork and LC follow ups as needed
- Improved progress with symptoms

WEEKS 4-6

- Baby is not sore and stretching exercises are not necessary after 4 weeks
- Healing patch gone and new frenulum takes final shape and position
- Bodywork, OT, PT or LC follow ups as needed
- Continual progress with feeding

Pain Management Recommendations:

UNDER 6 MONTHS

- Infant Acetaminophen/Tylenol (160 mg/5mL concentration)
Dose based on weight. Give every 4-6 hours for first few days as needed for pain.
- Arnica Montana 30C tablets – Homeopathic remedy used to treat inflammation.
- Instructions: Dissolve 10 pellets in 2-3 ounces of breast milk or water. Store chilled. Give approximately 2 mL every 1-2 hours for the first few days and then give as needed. May be given every 15 minutes during an acute episode.

OVER 6 MONTHS

- Children's Ibuprofen/Advil/Motrin
Infant's drops (50 mg/1.25 mL) or children's concentration (100 mg/5 mL)
- If infant is older than 2 months and Tylenol is ineffective, get consent from pediatrician for ibuprofen use.
- Dose based on weight every 6-8 hours as needed for pain

SOOTHING AGENTS

- Helps to lubricate sites and offer localized relief
- Best if kept chilled
- Safe for any age
- Simply apply small dab to treated areas 4-6 times a day
- Recommended Options: Hyland's Teething Gel, Orajel Naturals, Organic Coconut Oil, Camilia Teething Drops

Post-Op Stretching Exercises

After the procedure, the wound that is created will need to be manually stretched in order to prevent it from reattaching. The goal of the stretch is to ensure that the lasered areas heal with increased length and flexibility. Please thoroughly review the instructions below for optimal healing.

When should you start stretching? No more than 12 hours after the procedure
How often? Every 4 hours-including during the middle of the night
How long should I continue stretching? Lip -2 weeks Tongue-3 weeks

It is helpful to offer positive stimulation to the head and mouth before doing the stretches. A gentle massage of the baby's face and suck training exercises are helpful to ensure not every exercise is uncomfortable.

The stretches can be done before, after or in the middle of feeding. Some parents find it easier to do the stretches on a calm baby after feeding and some like to feed to baby after the stretches to sooth. It may take a few days to find a routine that best works for you.

It may require additional help to assist with a squirmy infant. If no help is available, you may use a swaddle to help keep their infant still.

An LED headlight will help you see the dark area underneath the tongue. You may also find that the stretching exercises are more comfortable when using well-fitted exam gloves. However, using your bare hands is perfectly fine as long as they are clean.

The Lip Stretch

CLICK HERE TO WATCH A VIDEO
ON LIP STRETCHES



The Tongue Stretch

CLICK HERE TO WATCH A VIDEO
ON TONGUE STRETCHES



Suck Training Information

Important: Suck training exercises are helpful for regaining proper tongue function. The exercises below are **NOT** intended to replace the in-person help of a lactation consultant or health care professional. Any delay in seeking expert help may put the breastfeeding relationship at further risk.

Use these exercises before feeding or as a playtime activity. Be sure to stop any exercise that your baby dislikes. It is not necessary to do every exercise; only use those that are helpful for your baby. Before beginning, wash your hands and be sure your nails are short and smooth. It is best to work directly with a lactation consultant, Occupational Therapist, or Speech Therapist to determine which exercises are best for you and your baby.

CLICK HERE TO WATCH A VIDEO
ON SUCK TRAINING EXERCISES



Infant Massage to Ease a Baby with TIGHT muscles

If your baby does not open wide, a gentle massage may help relax the jaw and facial muscles. A skilled body -worker such as a chiropractor, osteopath or craniosacral therapist who specializes in infant care may also help your baby.

Begin with a light fingertip circular massage under the baby's jaw from back to front on both sides.
Using fingertips,

General Information about body work

Body work is a general term used to describe therapies that may help relieve and normalize structural issues in the body. Some babies may be more complex and require more body work than others. Those who receive some form of bodywork tend to heal and rehabilitate better.

Common types of body work

Myofascial Release Therapy

Myofascial Release Therapy is a safe and very effective hands-on technique that involves applying gentle sustained pressure into the myofascial connective tissue restrictions to eliminate pain and restore motion. Myofascial Release Therapy is usually performed by a physical therapist or massage therapist.

Craniosacral Therapy

Craniosacral Therapy (CST) is a gentle, hands-on approach that releases tensions deep in the body to relieve pain and dysfunction. It also improves whole-body health and performance. CST is usually performed by a chiropractor or an osteopath.

Tummy Time

This is a simple at-home therapy you can perform a few times a day for 5-20 minutes. This may help your infant gain strength in the neck muscles that support proper sucking.

Providers we recommend you see

Occupational Therapist

OTs are able to help infants relieve tension in their bodies through techniques like myofascial release. They can also assist SLPs with oral motor work. We highly encourage working with an OT before and after the procedure to optimize progress.

Speech Therapist

SLPs may help with infants having difficulty with eating and drinking as well as small children with speech difficulties. We highly encourage working with an SLP before and after the procedure as well to optimize progress.

Chiropractors

Chiropractors may help work on structural issues that may affect one's overall health.

Normal things you may experience and helpful tips

EXTRA FUSSINESS AND INCONSOLABLE CRYING

DURING THE FIRST WEEK:

Most babies experience mild to moderate discomfort during the first few days. However, some babies may become inconsolable at times especially after the stretches.

Tip #1: Give pain medications and remedies within the first hour of the procedure. You may need to give medication at a consistent interval every 4 hours within the first day or two.

Tip #2: Do lots of skin-to-skin during the first 24-48 hours after the procedure. Even a nice warm bath or shower can really help settle your little one down.

Tip #3: Frozen breast milk can act as a natural numbing agent and help ease pain for some.

DIFFICULTY WITH FEEDING DURING THE FIRST WEEK:

During the first week you may see slight amount of bleeding while doing the stretches. This is not a major concern. It should resolve quickly and be safe to feed. Also, keep in mind that the excess amount of saliva will make one drop of blood appear worse.

Tip#1 While doing stretches, make sure the baby is not moving excessively and you have good control. This will minimize any inadvertent rubbing into the site.

Tip#2: Make sure your technique is consistent and done at even intervals. If you miss a stretch or if they are done with varying forces each time then it may bleed more.

Tip #3: Make sure your finger nails are trimmed and smooth. Even gloved fingers with long nails can cause too much irritation.

LIGHT BLEEDING:

It is normal to have some difficulty with latching immediately after the procedure at the office. Most will do fine as the day carries on but some will continue to struggle a bit at home. Remember, your baby is re-learning new movements so feeding may be inconsistent during the first week.

Tip#1: Follow up with your lactation consultant or feeding therapist for 1:1 visit to address any troubleshooting issues during the first week.

Tip#2: If your baby is having any struggles with the latch, try feeding your baby while taking a warm bath.

INCREASED DROOLING AND SPITTING UP:

The healing process stimulates an increase in saliva production. Additionally, the new tongue movement creates more saliva. This usually lasts a couple of weeks and is not a concern.

Also, an increase of transfer may occur, which can initially cause the baby to spit up more.

INCREASED SLEEPING:

This may be due to medication, exhaustion, or that the infant is feeding better and is more satisfied. Sleep may also act as a coping mechanism for discomfort