What is a tongue-tie?

A tongue-tie (also known as ankyloglossia) is when the membrane under the tongue (the lingual frenulum) is shortened or tight and restricts tongue mobility.

Where the membrane is attached at, or close to, the tongue tip, the tongue tip may be notch, foreshortened or have a heart shaped appearance. However, where the membrane is attached farther back, the tongue may look normal.

Pseudo-tongue-ties can be detected by feel and a more detailed assessment of tongue function. These photos show variations in appearance.

Tongue-tie and infant feeding

Common problems due to a tongue-tie include:

- Tongue tinged problems
- Tongue-tie or bruxism
- Difficulty with breastfeeding
- Difficulty with bottle-feeding
- Reduced milk supply
- Excretion from frequent feeding
- Changes from a breast to bottle

Steps to improve feeding for tongue-tied babies:

- Baby
  - Balancing tongue and jaw
  - Releasing tongue and jaw
  - Difficulty with tongue
  - Difficulty with tongue
  - Difficulty with tongue
  - Difficulty with tongue

- Reduced milk supply
- Excretion from frequent feeding
- Changes from a breast to bottle

Research


Conclusion: The randomized controlled trial has shown that frenotomy is effective in improving feeding difficulties. However, further research is needed to confirm these findings.

Where to get treatment

If you have any concerns about tongue-tie or feeding difficulties, please contact your local health professional. For more information, visit the website of the Association of Tongue-tie Practitioners: www.tongue-tie.org.uk or the UK Baby Friendly Initiative: www.babyfriendly.co.uk.