

Ankyloglossia

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Definitions

- **Ankyloglossia:** is a congenital developmental anomaly of the tongue characterized by a short, thick lingual frenulum resulting in restriction of tongue movement. Also known as "tongue-tie"
- **Frenulum:** a mucosal attachment containing muscle and connective tissue which connect structures such as lip and cheek to the alveolar mucosa or gingiva.
- **Frenectomy:** the complete removal of the frenum/frenulum including its attachment underlying bone.
- **Frenotomy:** simple cutting or incision of frenum.

Some physical exam findings

- Tongue extension restricted to alveolar ridge
- Limited elevation of tongue during crying
- Tip of tongue is notched or heart shaped
- Frenulum is short or inelastic
- Tongue is attached close to or on the alveolar ridge



Assessment

- Evaluation fully is important
- Ankyloglossia may be associated with no breastfeeding issues
- Better latch technique may be sufficient treatment
- May improve with time

Treatment

- Asymptomatic or mild cases do not usually require any treatment
- For more severe cases with no improvement with lactation management - frenotomy is performed.
- This can be done with laser or scissors

Position statements: AAPD (American academy of pediatric dentistry)

- AAPD: "supports additional research on the causative association between ankyloglossia and difficulties in breastfeeding and speech articulation. The AAPD recognizes that causes other than ankyloglossia are more common for breastfeeding difficulties and that, while frenulotomy for an infant with ankyloglossia can lead to an improvement in breastfeeding, not all infants with ankyloglossia require surgical intervention. Further randomized controlled trials and other prospective studies of high methodological quality are necessary to determine the indications and long-term effects of frenulotomy/frenulectomy."

Position statement: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM)

- ABM: "In the presence of a restrictive sublingual frenulum, frenotomy can be an effective way to increase maternal comfort and breast milk transfer by the infant. Providing this service may prevent the premature cessation of breastfeeding. However, the decision to treat is one that requires a high level of clinical skill, judgment and discernment. "

Position statement: ENT

- "Members of the group came to the consensus that frenotomy in infants with ankyloglossia can lead to an improvement in breastfeeding, not all infants with ankyloglossia need to have a frenotomy, there are other more common causes of breastfeeding difficulties."
- "A frenulum procedure is also an option in older children with speech articulation and/or other mechanical social issues but evidence is limited and of relatively poor quality. Similarly, the level of evidence surrounding the intervention for the maxillary frenulum and upper lip tie is poor. Further study is needed to refine patient selection and outcome assessments in these areas."

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