



Australian  
Breastfeeding  
Association

For Health  
Professionals

# Tongue-tie

A tongue-tie exists when the tongue has limited range of motion and subsequently impacts function due to a restrictive lingual frenulum.<sup>1</sup> Neonatal tongue-tie has an estimated prevalence of 8%.<sup>2</sup>

Approximately 50% of infants with a tongue-tie encounter breastfeeding problems. The following breastfeeding problems may be related to tongue-tie:

- nipple pain and damage
- the nipple looks flattened after breastfeeding
- you can see a compression/stripe mark on the nipple at the end of a breastfeed
- the baby fails to gain weight well.

Since there are various reasons for breastfeeding problems, it can be helpful to refer to a lactation consultant who can carry out a full breastfeeding assessment and help determine what factors may be contributing to the breastfeeding problems. If it is determined that a tongue-tie is interfering with breastfeeding, then a frenotomy may be warranted.<sup>1</sup>

Currently there is zero to inadequate evidence to support performing labial or buccal frenotomies to assist with breastfeeding.

## Further reading

Brodribb, W. (Ed.). (2019). Ineffectual sucking. In *Breastfeeding Management in Australia* (5th ed., pp. 462–467). Australian Breastfeeding Association.

ABA Professional Feature Article, [Tongue-tie in infants](#).

## Resources for families

Information for families can be found by searching for 'tongue-tie' on the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) website, [breastfeeding.asn.au](http://breastfeeding.asn.au)

Women with concerns that their infant may have a tongue-tie often require additional breastfeeding support. ABA breastfeeding counsellors do not provide medical advice. However, a call to the [National Breastfeeding Helpline](#) on 1800 686 268 can provide reassurance, support and practical suggestions to support continued breastfeeding.

## References

1. LeFort, Y., Evans, A., Livingstone, V., Douglas, P., Dahlquist, N., Donnelly, B., Leeper, K., Harley, E., & Lappin, S. (2021). Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine position statement on ankyloglossia in breastfeeding dyads. *Breastfeed Med*, 16(4), 278–281
2. Hill, R. R., Lee, C. S., & Pados, B. F. (2020). The prevalence of ankyloglossia in children aged <1 year: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Pediatr Res*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41390-020-01239-y>