



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.¹ Neonatal tongue-tie has an estimated prevalence of 8%.²

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.¹

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

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>