

# **Infant Tongue Tie Guide for Parents**

*Ages 0-12 Months | Step-by-step support from signs to treatment*

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*This guide is for informational purposes only and does not replace professional assessment.*

## **1 Signs Your Baby May Have a Tongue Tie**

These signs don't confirm a tongue tie - they signal that a professional evaluation is worthwhile. The more boxes checked, the more important it is to seek assessment.

### **Baby Signs:**

- ❑ Difficulty latching or maintaining the latch
- ❑ Chomping, clicking, or smacking sounds during feeds
- ❑ Feeds lasting 45 minutes or longer
- ❑ Baby frequently pulls off the breast
- ❑ Milk dribbling from the corners of the mouth
- ❑ Poor weight gain or slow growth
- ❑ Excessive gas, colic, or reflux-like symptoms
- ❑ Baby seems hungry even after long feeds
- ❑ Shallow latch - only the nipple, not the areola
- ❑ Tongue cannot reach the upper gum or extend past the lower lip

### **Mother Signs (Breastfeeding):**

- ❑ Nipple pain, cracking, bleeding, or blistering
- ❑ Nipple appears lipstick-shaped after feeds
- ❑ Feeling of incomplete breast emptying
- ❑ Recurring blocked ducts or mastitis
- ❑ Low milk supply concerns
- ❑ Feeding feels like a constant battle

## **2 Your First Steps - Before Considering a Release**

A tongue tie release is not always the first answer. Many feeding challenges resolve significantly with the right support team in place first.

### **Step 1: See an IBCLC Lactation Consultant**

Assess latch mechanics, feeding coordination, and milk transfer. Many feeding struggles can be improved at this stage alone.

- Latch and positioning assessment
- Milk transfer measurement
- Nipple shield fitting if needed
- Guidance during post-release recovery

### **Step 2: Work With a Manual Therapist**

Babies often carry tension from pregnancy or birth that affects how they move their jaw, neck, and tongue. Options include:

- Osteopath
- Pediatric Chiropractor
- Pediatric Physiotherapist
- Craniosacral Therapist with infant experience

### **Step 3: Consult a Tongue Tie Release Provider**

If feeding challenges continue despite the above, a tongue tie provider can evaluate the restriction and discuss whether a release is appropriate.

## **3 What to Expect: Before, During, and After**

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### **Before the Procedure:**

- Attend manual therapy - ideally 1-2 sessions before release
- Connect with your IBCLC so she knows your feeding baseline
- Feed your baby before the appointment so your baby is calm
- Ask your provider all your questions
- Arrange for support at home for the first few days

### **The Day of the Procedure:**

- The release itself takes seconds - laser or sterile scissors
- Your baby may cry briefly; this is normal
- Feed your baby immediately after where possible
- Expect your baby to be tired - some feeds may be skipped
- You may notice immediate changes in latch, or improvement may take days

### Aftercare (First 4 Weeks):

- Perform stretching exercises in your baby's mouth as instructed - prevents reattachment
- Exercises are done 4–6 times per day for approximately 4 weeks
- Continue working with your IBCLC through the recovery window
- Return for manual therapy - the body needs to reorganise
- Contact your provider if you notice reattachment signs or unusual symptoms

## 4 If You Choose Not to Release

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Choosing not to release a tongue tie is a valid decision. What matters is that your child has ongoing support.

- Regular physiotherapy to monitor compensatory muscle patterns
- Oral motor exercises as your child develops
- Nasal breathing and oral posture work
- Monitor for mouth breathing, sleep disruption, or dental crowding as your child grows
- Reassess the decision as your child gets older - especially around ages 4–5

## 5 Questions to Ask at Your Consultation

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- How many tongue tie releases have you performed?
- Do you use laser or scissors, and what are the differences?
- Do you work with an IBCLC and manual therapist as part of the care team?
- What does aftercare involve, and how long does it take?
- What happens if the tissue reattaches?
- What if I see no improvement after the release?
- What signs should prompt me to contact you after the procedure?

## 6 Building Your Child's Care Team

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- **IBCLC Lactation Consultant:** feeding assessment, latch support, and guidance during recovery
- **Pediatric Physiotherapist:** body tension, compensatory patterns, and pre/post-release movement work
- **Osteopath or Chiropractor:** cranial and structural release, birth-related tension
- **Myofunctional Therapist:** tongue posture, swallowing retraining, nasal breathing (ages 4+)
- **Tongue Tie Release Provider:** formal evaluation and the procedure itself

