



Breastfeeding  
Committee  
for Saskatchewan

[www.thebcs.ca](http://www.thebcs.ca)

## Important

*If you feel you are having any breastfeeding difficulties that are not going away, please be assessed by someone who is knowledgeable about breastfeeding and can help you to improve things. An International Board Certified Lactation Consultant or IBCLC is an expert in breastfeeding.*

### For further information contact:

Local Public Health Nurse

International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)

Local breastfeeding support Group  
Saskatchewan HealthLine 811

#### References:

Genna, C. (2008). *Supporting sucking skills in breastfeeding infants*. Sudbury, Mass.: Jones and Bartlett.

Ghaehri, B. (n.d.). Blog. Retrieved September 1, 2015.

Lawrence, K. (2013). Breastfeeding Should be Fun and Enjoyable. Retrieved September 1, 2015.

Newman, J., & Pitman, T. (2014). *Dr. Jack Newman's guide to breastfeeding* (Rev. & updated ed.). Toronto: HarperCollins.

# Breastfeeding Tongue Tie and Lip Tie

## What is Tongue Tie?

Most people have a stretchy band of tissue between the tongue and the floor of the mouth. In some babies this skin or "frenulum" is tighter than it should be. It may be right at the tip of the tongue or it may be all the way at the back. Your baby may not be able to lift his or her tongue up or it may look different when it lifts.

## What is a Lip Tie?

In this case the stretchy band of tissue is between the top lip and the gums. Sometimes this frenulum is also too tight. It may be attached to the front of the gum or even wrap over the edge where teeth will come in and attach behind the gum ridge.

## How can these affect breastfeeding?

- Mothers are more likely to have sore or injured nipples
- Babies may not latch or suck well or may "bite"
- Babies can get less milk which can lower mom's milk supply
- Feeds may be very long
- Baby may not gain weight well
- Babies are more likely to stop breastfeeding too early

## What you can do:

If you suspect your baby may have a tongue or lip tie it is important to be assessed by someone who is knowledgeable in assessing for and recognizing tongue and lip ties. Tongue and lip ties are a rapidly growing area of research in breastfeeding. Not all health care providers recognize them.

An expert knows how to combine the function of the tongue with the physical findings and make an accurate assessment. By performing a physical exam and feeding assessment, issues such as poor positioning, latch or low muscle tone will be identified, putting all the pieces together for the whole picture.

You may find an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC), a dentist, or an Ear Nose Throat Surgeon an expert who is familiar with them. An IBCLC is trained in looking at how tongue and lip tie affect breastfeeding and will help you to optimize you and your baby's breastfeeding experience.

Depending on what is assessed, you may be referred on further to a dentist or an Ear Nose Throat specialist for a revision of the lip or tongue tie.