

Tips and Suggestions for Improving Tongue and Lip Tether Release Outcomes

1. For the first night complete one stretch in the later evening. Complete the next stretch in the early hours of the following morning. From this point on complete your stretches as demonstrated, every 4-6 hours for the entire next 3 weeks. At the end of the 3 week period continue the stretches by doing 5 stretches the first day of week 4, and then 4 stretches the next day, then 3 stretches the next day, then 2 stretches the next day and then 1 stretch on the final day. If possible during this healing process, complete the "Sleeping Tongue Posture Hold" during times when your baby is very sleepy as listed under "Resources" in the pamphlet.
2. Gloves are not necessary for stretching or completing oral massage or exercises. Wash your hands and keep your finger nails very short to avoid any damage to the delicate wound. You may want to consider getting a box of gloves from your local pharmacy as this does help reduce slipping while stretching
3. A thick white coating will appear on the wound within the first 2 days following the procedure. This is a normal oral healing process and is not a sign of infection. There will be some redness and possible swelling around the periphery of the wound which is also normal. In very young babies the wounds may appear a mustard yellow colour if the baby is jaundiced and this too is completely normal.
4. A fever is not a common side effect of this procedure. Continue to monitor your baby in the way that you would had you not had this procedure done and see your physician immediately if warranted.
5. When stretching the wounds it is not possible to overstretch them or tear them farther than the original release procedure. If the wounds appear like they are tearing during stretching, this is an indication that the wound is reattaching or not being sufficiently opened. Apply more force with stretching and allow this tearing to gently occur. The area of separation will likely bleed in this process. Don't Panic! I encourage you to nurse or feed your baby to help the bleeding to stop. When you complete your next stretch in 4-6 hours you will notice the area that is now separated and there is not likely to be any further bleeding.
6. Excess post-surgical bleeding is typically not an emergency. If the above feeding tactic does not stop the bleeding, apply a moistened black tea bag or wet gauze with compression for several minutes and contact Dr. Kerr for guidance. The most important rule is that if you cannot reach Dr. Kerr and the bleeding will not stop, proceed to an emergency room.
7. The most beneficial times to stretch are with a feeding. This will help to comfort your baby and reduce any bleeding that may occur. If your baby is very worked up or overdue to eat, I recommend feeding them first to calm them and then completing the stretch half-way through the feeding so they are still eager to feed.
8. Swelling will be seen in the outer skin above the upper lip and will reduce on its own in about 3-4 days.
9. Excess drooling is quite common with increased tongue mobility after the procedure
10. In addition to pain medication and homeopathy, a very useful way to calm your baby down if they seem overly upset is to take a bath with them and nurse or feed them in the tub. Skin-to-skin comfort has multiple benefits
11. It is common for infants to exhibit the most discomfort in the 3-6 hours following the procedure. They are typically the most agitated in the first 48 hours. This will reduce with time. Provide safe, supportive skin contact and reassurance and use pain relieving modalities as needed. When deciding on when to give medication, you know your baby best. Always follow dosing as prescribed by the baby's weight.
12. Improvements in feeding will vary from case to case. Some infants show improved latch immediately. Others may take up to 3 weeks to notice changes. Oral exercises and aftercare guidance will be provided to support proper oral function. A bodyworker well versed in infant cranial-sacral therapy is often needed to support overall function.
13. Please refer to the Active Wound Management instructions in your pamphlet for more specific details on aftercare. Try not to take on too much in the days following the procedure. You and your baby need rest!
14. Resources will be provided to you for local Lactation consultants, speech therapists, and bodyworkers depending on your specific needs. ***Thank you for your continued trust in our dental healthcare team!***