

Post-op Instructions after Frenectomies

Preparation and Healing

Wash your hands thoroughly; gloves are not necessary. Have a small amount of **coconut oil** available for the exercises. It is essential to **swaddle the arms down** to make the process as efficient and safe as possible.

A small amount of spotting or bleeding is common, especially in the first few days, though the laser minimizes this. After several days, the wound will look **white or yellow**, appearing similar to pus. This is a **completely normal** inflammatory response. Do not let outside parties convince you it is an infection; if you have concerns, contact the specialist's office directly.

The 4-Week Schedule

- **The First Day:** Perform one set of exercises the evening of the procedure and the next session the following morning.
- **Weeks 1–3:** Complete **6 sessions per day**. Five of these should be spread throughout the day (many parents sync these with diaper changes). The remaining session **must be in the middle of the night**, halfway between your last evening stretch and first morning stretch. This prevents the wound from healing inappropriately overnight.
- **Week 4 (The Taper):** Remove one session each day. Drop the middle-of-the-night session once you reach 3 sessions per day.
- **The 6-Hour Rule:** Ideally, never go longer than 6 hours between any two sessions.

Sucking Exercises (Neuromuscular Re-education)

These exercises help reorganize weak or disorganized sucking patterns. Spend **30–45 seconds** on each prior to the wound stretches (you do not need to do these during the nighttime session).

1. **Lateral Movements:** Rub the lower gumline from side to side; the baby's tongue should follow your finger to strengthen side-to-side movement.
2. **Tug-of-War:** Let the baby suck your finger and gently try to pull it out while they try to suck it back in to strengthen the tongue.

3. **Suck/Pellet Press:** Apply gentle pressure to the roof of the mouth to initiate sucking. Once they begin, press the back of your nail into the tongue to interrupt the suck and break the seal. Re-stimulate the palate to repeat.
4. **Cheek Massage:** Place an index finger inside the cheek and a thumb outside to massage and reduce tension on both sides.

Wound Stretches

1. The Upper Lip This is the easier site. Place your finger under the lip and move it up until you bump into resistance. Gently sweep from side to side for 1 second. The goal is to separate the raw surfaces of the lip and gum so they cannot stick together. **Do not use force.**

2. The Tongue Approach from above (behind the baby's head). Place thumbs on the forehead and middle fingers on the chin to stabilize the jaw. Insert one index finger toward the cheek to create space, then insert the second index finger.

- **The Lift:** Dive both index fingers under the tongue and pick it up toward the roof of the mouth. **Push your index fingers together** so the pressure is at the top of the "diamond" (toward the tonsils). This stretches the wound to make it "tall" so a longer, more flexible band can form.
 - *Repetitions:* 1 lift per session in Week 1; 5 lifts per session starting Week 2.
- **The Propping Sweep:** While propping the tongue up with one finger, use the other finger to sweep from the bottom of the diamond upward. This separates the horizontal fold across the wound. This should be a lifting motion, not forceful rubbing.
- **Floor Massage:** Massage the floor of the mouth on either side of the diamond (outside the wound). You can use firmer pressure here to loosen the surrounding muscles.

Follow-Up and Medical Alerts

To ensure the best long-term results, it is **essential** that you follow up with your **lactation consultant** after this procedure.

Contact the office immediately if you notice:

- Bleeding that cannot be controlled.
- Your baby completely refuses to nurse or take a bottle.
- A fever higher than 101.5°F.