

## Maternal and Child Health (MACH)

The MACH service offers:

- feeding assessment for all babies to determine whether a tongue tie may be affecting feeding
- group support for parents and babies attending the 'early days' group for babies up to three months old
- referral to Queen Elizabeth II Family Centre (QE II) for further support.

## Tongue tie clinic at CHWC

The tongue tie clinic in the paediatric outpatients at the CHWC is for those babies born in the ACT who are:

- inpatients of CHWC
- still admitted to their outpatient programs
- attending MACH services within 28 days of age.

Babies are assessed and treated as required in the tongue tie clinic.

## Community Health Intake (CHI)

Phone: 02 5124 9977 for locations, times and ongoing MACH support.

## CHWC paediatric outpatients clinic

A GP may refer you to this service especially if your baby is one month of age or older. A paediatric surgeon will review your baby and discuss treatment options with you.

Phone: 02 5124 7550

## Speech pathology, Canberra Hospital and Health Services, ACT Health

This service provides assessment and support for babies up to eight weeks, to establish breast or bottle feeding, including a tongue tie assessment. You may be referred to this service by your MACH nurse, your GP, your specialist, or other health professional. You can also refer yourself.

Email: [SpeechPathology@act.gov.au](mailto:SpeechPathology@act.gov.au)

Phone: 02 5124 2230

## GP services

Some general practices can assess and release (snip) a tongue tie.

## Australian Breastfeeding Association

Operates a 24 hour help line run by trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors. You can also use this service to find an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant.

Phone: 1800 686 268

Web: [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)

or [www.lcanz.org/](http://www.lcanz.org/) to find an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant

## ACT Health web

[www.health.act.gov.au/breastfeeding](http://www.health.act.gov.au/breastfeeding)

## healthdirect:

Phone: 1800 022 222

Web: [www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)

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If English is not your first language and you need the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please call 13 14 50.

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# Tongue tie and feeding your baby

Information for families



**ACT**  
Government

**Canberra Health  
Services**

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)

## What is a tongue tie?

A tongue tie happens when the thin piece of tissue, called a 'frenulum', joins the bottom of the tongue to the floor of the mouth, limiting the baby's tongue movement. Your baby may have trouble moving their tongue and have feeding problems. Between 4-11% of babies are born with a tongue tie.

By examining your baby's mouth we can tell if they have a tongue tie.

## There are different types of tongue tie

### Type 1 (100%) tongue tie



### Type 3 (50%) tongue tie



### Did you know?

*Between 4-11% of babies are born with a tongue tie.*

## Does a tongue tie affect my baby's feeding?

**For some babies the tongue tie does not affect their ability to feed.**

Other babies with a tongue tie may not be able to:

- successfully breastfeed
- touch the roof of their mouth with their tongue
- poke the tip of their tongue out past their gums and lips
- keep their mouth sealed around the breast or bottle resulting in:
  - » poor attachment, and/or
  - » dribbling of milk while feeding.

If your baby has a feeding difficulty related to a tongue tie, your baby may:

- not stay on the breast or a bottle until the end of the feed
- have difficulty attaching to your breast (your baby may become fussy and come on and off the breast)
- lose suction while feeding
- quickly become tired when feeding
- make a clicking sound when feeding
- have poor weight gain.

### Signs you may experience when your baby's tongue tie is causing breastfeeding problems:

- nipple pain
- cracked, sore and bleeding nipples
- a mis-shapen, flat or stripe mark on your nipple after breastfeeding
- engorgement – an uncomfortable buildup of milk in your breast tissue causing firm and swollen breasts
- mastitis – inflamed breast tissue, which may reoccur when milk is not removed
- a low milk supply.

## I think my baby has a tongue tie which is affecting feeding—what are the next steps?

If you think your baby is not feeding well for any reason, please contact your midwife, maternal and child health (MACH) services, an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant or your GP for support. After ruling out medical reasons that may be affecting your baby's feeding, they will assess if your baby has a tongue tie that is affecting their feeding.

They may:

- take a thorough history of your birthing and feeding experience
- examine your baby including looking inside of your baby's mouth to check for any conditions affecting feeding
- watch how your baby feeds.

### If my baby has a tongue tie that is affecting feeding, what happens next?

- You will be offered further feeding support by a lactation consultant or trained professional.
- Some babies with a tongue tie may benefit from a simple procedure (snip) to release the tongue tie.

## Where can I get help?

### Centenary Hospital for Women and Children (CHWC)

Babies with a tongue tie that affects their feeding will be reviewed prior to leaving hospital. For a small number of babies, release (snip) of the tongue tie may happen while still in hospital. Others may be referred to the tongue tie clinic for review after leaving hospital.