

# Frenectomy

A frenum is a fold of tissue or muscle connecting the lips, cheek or tongue to the jawbone. A frenectomy is the removal of one of these folds of tissue.

Sometimes a frenum can be attached too high on the gums causing either recession or spaces between teeth. The procedure to remove this is called a *Labial Frenectomy* and involves the removal of tissue attachment between the two front teeth. The frenum can be attached in such a way that it prevents the baby teeth from coming through.

A *Lingual frenectomy* removes the fold of tissue under the tongue. Some people have a large frenum that limits tongue movement and can interfere with speech. This is commonly known as tongue tie.

If a child has tongue-tie, he or she should receive speech therapy to see if that can correct the problem. The therapy will involve special exercises to increase the tongue's mobility.

A frenectomy can be performed by laser. This is a lot more comfortable for the patient because it means that no scalpel or stitches are required.

A frenectomy can take several weeks to heal completely. Rinsing with salt water helps keep the area clean.

If the operation does not solve the problem, it may need to be redone. Redoing a lingual frenectomy is somewhat common. Few labial frenectomies need repeating.

Any surgery carries a risk of bleeding. Because of the many blood vessels in the tongue, lingual frenectomies are more likely to result in bleeding, although this complication is quite rare.

