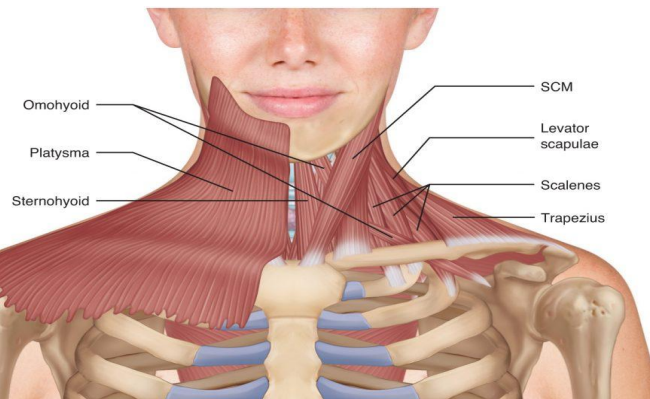


## **How Osteopathic Treatment supports Tongue Tie Surgery (Frenuloplasty)**

The results of a frenuloplasty can be greatly improved through the interdisciplinary work of dentists, myofunctional therapists, physical therapists and osteopaths. All, or some, of these therapies, may seem overwhelming and pricey, but the long term results are worth the effort.

One of the three main principles of osteopathy states that the body is a unit. Nothing happens within the body without affecting the other parts. This is especially true for the tongue. The tongue muscles are connected to the hyoid bone, which in turn has muscular connections to the chest and shoulders. This connection explains why a tongue tie condition can influence posture. Releasing the tongue is an important step in making it possible for the patient to resume a healthy posture.



Additionally the tongue and the jaw are also connected to the pelvis. Both areas are influencing each other through the spine and spinal muscles as well as through fascial connections. An imbalance in the pelvis may also be responsible for relapses after frenuloplasty. Balancing the pelvis and releasing fascial tension is an excellent way to prevent those relapses. Vice versa, a frenuloplasty can help prevent relapses of pelvis imbalances.

Below find a brief overview for patients of how osteopathy can benefit the patient before and after a tongue tie release surgery.

### **Before the Frenuloplasty;**

Osteopaths check the tongue itself and loosen tight muscles resulting in a more efficient and thorough surgical technique. In children, this may take 2-4 sessions. In adults, depending on the severity and duration of the dysfunctions, additional sessions may be needed. It is recommended to start osteopathic treatment as early as possible before the surgery date to obtain optimal results.

Another important area to consider is the cranial (skull) area. Cranial strains are areas within the bones of the skull which are out of alignment. Cranial osteopathy offers comprehensive diagnostic tools to assess the nervous system and the cranial area. The nerves which innervate the tongue and throat originate in the brain stem and leave the skull through tiny holes in between bones. If the bones are shifted ever so slightly, the holes narrow and irritate the nerves passing through. Depending on the function of the nerve, this can cause pain in the face, swallowing difficulties and

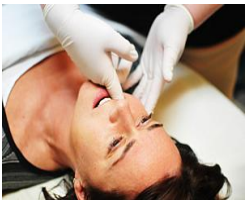
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Influence the facial muscles. Rebalancing the cranial bones before surgery ensures optimal nerve innervations of the tongue muscles and helps the patient learn new patterns afterwards.

## **After the Frenuloplasty;**

If, after the tongue tie release surgery, the muscles and joints involved in an upright stance stay untreated, the body may release tension initially. However, after some time the rest of the muscular chain takes over and brings the body back into the old, familiar posture. Old habits are hard to break! The difficulty in changing one's posture is often found in the stiffness of joints and tightness of muscles making it difficult for the body to assume a better posture. Osteopathy offers an excellent approach to release the muscular tension allowing the body to take up a new posture. When followed up with postural integration therapy (strengthening the muscles and forming new habits in the brain with active exercises) the body gets used to the new position and accepts it as the new normal.



Due to a prolonged opening of the mouth with a slightly extended neck during surgery, the suboccipital muscles may become tight and compress the first cervical vertebra (C1).

This can cause headaches, neck pain, dizziness and blurry vision. Again, if no prior C1 problems were present, one treatment should be sufficient to restore balance in the upper cervical area.

Additionally after surgery, it is highly recommended to treat the nervous system. Even though considered a small surgery, a frenuloplasty activates the autonomic nervous system. This is a normal reaction during the procedure and in healthy persons, it self-regulates back to homeostasis. However, in some patients, the down regulation is inhibited and the system stays in a state of fight-or-flight or freezing. In patients with a previous history of anxiety, nervousness or depression, the self-regulation mechanism is often inhibited. Within those activated states, the immune system is suppressed and slows down healing. If no previous trauma has been present, one osteopathic treatment is generally sufficient to restore balance. This treatment should be done as soon after the surgery as possible.

## **In Summary;**

Osteopathic treatment, myofunctional therapy and physical therapy assist in continuing to stretch and relax the tightened tissues of the mouth and to improve the dysfunctional acquired movement patterns. Even though the actual cause of the dysfunction may have been addressed through the frenuloplasty, without addressing the compensatory muscular and joint tension, it can be expected that symptoms will return. With appropriate rehabilitation, the newly released tongue has a supportive mechanism to maintain its full function. This will assist in minimizing any unwanted tissue re-attachment post surgery.

It seems that the old saying "It takes a village to raise a child" is certainly true for tongue tie issues.