

Active Wound Management

This is the most important part of your infant's successful healing after the surgical procedure is completed. Failure to follow these stretching methods may result in reattachment and the need for additional office visits or additional surgery if the area heals back together. Use enough force to make sure the area does not close. Begin these physical therapy procedures tonight and continue them 3 times daily for at least 3 weeks. If you reside in the area, a one week post-op appointment will be recommended to evaluate healing. These exercises can be completed in conjunction with feedings to help comfort your baby during active wound management. Gloves are not necessary; wash your hands prior to completing the exercises.

The correct position of your child to complete the physical therapy stretching is with the infants head in your lap while their feet are facing away from you.



The Upper Lip Stretch

Grasping the upper lip with your index fingers and thumbs, gently pull the lip upward until it touches the infant's nose using enough force to open the entire diamond-shaped surgical site and hold to a slow count of 3. Follow this stretch by gently massaging the wound with the flat part of your index finger to separate any fibres which will help to prevent the lip from becoming tethered again.

The Tongue Stretch

Swoop your index fingers toward the inner cheek one at a time to make room for your fingers in the mouth. Next, Place your index fingers on each side of the wound on the underside of the tongue and forcefully open the diamond-shaped area. It is important to use sufficient gentle force to totally reopen the surgical site to prevent reattachment. Gently push back and downward towards the infant's throat to the count of 3. Push the lower jaw down with your middle fingers on your infant's chin while pushing the underside of the tongue. If gagging occurs, release the stretch and try again. Follow by massaging the area with your index finger.



A thick white or yellowish diamond-shaped appearance is a normal appearance within 24-48 hours after surgery. The white colour is normal and does not indicate any type of infection. It is ok to touch this area with your clean fingers.

Resources:

Photos and information courtesy of Dr. Lawrence Kotlow, Pediatric Dentist.

For more information please visit the following websites:

Dr. Kotlow www.kiddsteeth.com

Newman Breastfeeding site www.nbc.ca

Dr. Bobby Ghaheri www.drghaheri.com

Thank you for having the confidence in our dental office to provide your child's oral health care. The following information is designed to give you the best post-operative success rate following your infant's oral surgery.

In addition to the physical therapy stretches listed in this pamphlet the following services are highly recommend to improve your overall success rate:

Consultation prior to and following surgery with a [Certified Lactation Consultant](#) or [La Leche League](#) who can support you with your breastfeeding experience.

Bodywork with a person knowledgeable in [Cranial-Sacral Therapy](#) for infants, such as a Pediatric Chiropractor, Cranial-Sacral therapist, or Osteopath who can aid in restoring full oral function and mobility.

Regular [Tummy-Time Activity](#) should be practiced daily following your infants procedure.

Facial massaging and suck exercises can be used to improve latch and mobility. Run your finger along the lower gumline and try to get your baby to follow with their tongue. Have your infant root and suck on your finger. Gently pull your finger away to strengthen their suck. Massage upward on the palate and then flip your finger over and push gently on the middle of the tongue.

[Coconut Oil or All-Natural Teething Gel](#) can be applied to the surgical site as needed after surgery [Tylenol or Motrin type medications](#) can be given as directed to reduce post-operative discomfort. Please follow the appropriate instructions for your infant's age and weight.

A mother's breastmilk can also act as an analgesic to help baby cope with post-operative pain. Plenty of skin-to-skin contact and gentle rocking or walking motions can help to ease baby during healing.

Please consult the Frequently Asked Questions form provided for further information following the procedure.

If you have any questions or concerns following your infant's lip or tongue revision **please do not hesitate** to contact Dr. Kerr directly at any time using the following methods:

During regular office hours at

[519-735-5555](tel:519-735-5555)

After hours by cell phone at

[519-567-2878](tel:519-567-2878)

Or via personal email at

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