

Tongue-tie: A Holistic Approach for Breastfeeding Infants

Written by Andrea Auerbach, D.C.

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New moms are well aware of the importance of breastfeeding. Moms who are eager to breastfeed their newborns often find themselves disheartened if they run into difficulties with nursing.

They may find the infant is having trouble maintaining suction, or chewing on the nipple, or becoming irritable during and after nursing. An infant may tire from the added effort and fall asleep before eating enough. Insufficient weight gain may become a concern. The mother, in turn, may suffer from blocked milk ducts, painful breasts or cracked nipples, and may become frustrated and discontinue nursing. Often this leads to the mother feeling depressed and believing that if she cannot meet her child's needs she is not a good mother.

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A holistic approach for breastfeeding infants



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Breastfeeding is by far the best choice for infant feeding for numerous reasons. In an article in *PATHWAYS* No. 11 titled "Breastfeeding Difficulties and Chiropractic," author Jeanne Ohm, D.C., offers the chiropractic perspective: "Significant research shows that from a nutritional, immunological, digestive, neurological, developmental, mental, psychological and emotional standpoint, there is no replacement."

Chiropractic care offers a conservative approach that appeals to many parents. It is gentle, non-invasive and proven safe for children. As chiropractors we assume the structural makeup of the infant is intact and then we look for what is obstructing normal function. Chiropractic care facilitates the child's body to heal on its own. In her

article, Ohm states, "In the case of breastfeeding difficulty, as with many childhood disorders, the cause of the problem often traces back to undetected biomechanical injuries to the spine and cranium at birth. The failure to recognize these biomechanical injuries and their relationship to difficulty in breastfeeding leads to incorrect conclusions and, therefore, inadequate recommendations and treatments."

These "biomechanical injuries" are termed subluxations. Subluxations are misalignments of the bones that interfere with the nerve transmission (communication) to the area and in turn the function of a joint. The spinal

bones (vertebrae), bones of the skull (cranial bones) and facial bones including the TMJ (temporomandibular joint) all participate in the process of latching and sucking.

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A baby that is having difficulties nursing most likely has subluxation in one or more of these areas. It has been my experience that when an infant is subluxated in these areas and adjusted, these obstacles to nursing are corrected and normal function returns. Breastfeeding is then resumed.

Subluxations can occur in a number of ways exacerbated by physical, chemical or emotional stresses. *Williams Obstetrics*, the "bible of obstetrics," parallels chiropractic theory by stating, "the diameter of the woman's pelvis is decreased when the sacrum is displaced." In this circumstance the mother has a misalignment or subluxation of the pelvis. This may interfere with the baby's ability to attain the optimal positioning. Compression on

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