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Frenectomy

by COQUITLAMPERIO on MARCH 29, 2013

The frenulum or frenum is a thin band of connective tissue found in different parts of the body. They are found in several areas of the mouth. Occasionally, a frenum may be too tight, thick, or short. A frenectomy is the surgical removal of the frenum. This is a very common procedure, and is usually done on children or adults who are prescribed dentures. Oral frenum can be found under the center of the upper lip (labial) between the two front teeth or under the center of the tongue (lingual). This tissue may interfere with the function or development of the tongue or lips.



Labial Frenectomy

A labial frenectomy is the removal of the band of tissue found inside the mouth in the center of the upper lip. A frenum that is attached too low can cause gaps between the front teeth and gum recession. It can also interfere with the fit of an upper denture.

Lingual Frenectomy

A lingual frenectomy is the removal of the band of tissue found inside the mouth under the center of the tongue. A frenum that is attached too close to the tip of the tongue can cause difficulty with breast feeding in infants. It can also hinder tooth development and interfere with speech. A person who has this condition is sometimes called "tongue tied" because of the limited range of motion.

A frenectomy can be done in a hospital operating room, or in a dental office. It is a fairly quick procedure. The usual operating time is between 5 and 10 minutes. After anesthesia is given, a scalpel, laser, or electro-cauterizing instrument is used to remove the frenum. If a scalpel is used, sutures may be needed to reduce bleeding.

There are few complications associated with frenectomies. The surgical site usually heals on its own. Over the counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are usually prescribed. Warm salt water rinses may help soothe the area. Teeth in the area of the surgical site should be gently brushed and flossed. In rare instances, the frenum can re-grow and the operation may need to be redone.

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