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Helpful Tips for Post-op Frenectomy Stretches

- Wash hands before and after stretching.
- Have Afrin nose spray and gauze available if needed to control any bleeding. Administer pain medication approximately 30 minutes prior to stretching.
- Start stretches at least 4 hours after the procedure (unless sutured) to maintain the patency of the opening.
- Sutured areas should not be stretched until the sutures are dissolved or until the 1 week post-op, whichever comes first. It is important, however, to check the sutured sites daily to be sure the sutures are still intact and dissolving appropriately. If you notice that the diamond has reopened in a previously sutured site, call your release provider or therapist ASAP to advise on next steps. Stretch 4-6 times per day for at least 4 weeks or until your release provider tells you otherwise.
- Find ways to ease yourself as well as the child.
- Establish as calm and soothing of an environment as possible.
- Positive facial expressions and praise are beneficial.
- “Play” in the mouth a bit before doing stretches.
- Play relaxing music, sing songs, make funny faces and silly sounds, count, and/or tickle for distraction.
- It may be helpful to swaddle your baby.
- If possible, have another person available to help hold the child’s head so the person performing the stretches is able to access the mouth more easily.
- If alone, try sitting on the floor with your legs stretched out in front of you in a V and laying the child on his/her back between your legs with the feet pointing away from you. Put the child’s arms under your thighs and the child’s legs under your legs to safely stabilize during stretching.
- To keep infants from associating pain with feedings, try to perform stretches during diaper changes, play time, and/or bath time.
- Wear latex-free or cotton gloves to provide a better grip and so the child does not associate pain with your touch.
- Gloves or fingers dipped in cold water or milk can provide comfort and reduce inflammation.
- You may freeze thin layers of breastmilk or formula in milk storage bags that can be used as “ice chips” and applied to release sites before and after stretching.
- Apply a homeopathic solution to release sites after stretching. Many may be refrigerated.