

Bodywork: What, Who, Why

By Jennifer Welch, IBCLC

The term “bodywork” refers to either a Pediatric Chiropractor, Osteopath, or Cranial Sacral Therapist. The discipline is less important than the individual's experience and skill. Any one of the ones mentioned can help a lot if they know what they are doing. Whenever there is any type of tie, this creates muscle tension in the cranial-sacral system (from the top of the head, down to the tailbone). A tie pulls on structures, and the body in turn compensates, creating tension. Everything is connected. Did you know issues in the hips can affect the jaw? This tension can make it difficult for baby to open their mouth properly, move their tongue properly, manoeuver their head and neck properly to breastfeed, cause pain for baby, etc. To add to this, birth itself can cause problems. Birth puts incredible force on baby's skull and neck. Sometimes the way baby is positioned in utero (breech, early engagement, twins or more...) can cause issues. Even a physiological normal birth, one where there was no medications or other intervention can cause problems, but if you have a birth where there was any intervention at all, the risk is elevated that your baby will have muscle tension issues. In the case of a baby who has tight frenulums, sometimes these restrictive frenulums can be buried or pulled back in tight muscles. Before a frenectomy is performed, we want to work out as much of this tension as possible so that the doctor or dentist can get as much of the frenulum as possible. It is likely though, that not all of the tension will resolve completely until the frenulums are released (remember how everything is connected?), so we also recommend body work after the frenectomy, to help the body release its tension and get everything in the right place and moving properly. The treatments afterwards need to be frequent, much more frequent than you would expect for an adult (usually 1 or 2 times per week at least). Ideally, we want treatments 48 hrs before and 48 hrs after, and thereafter as needed, as recommended by the body worker (it is case specific). It's not always possible to schedule 48 hrs before and after, so do the best you can, as close to the frenectomy as possible.

Extracted from

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