

Small op made a big difference

HEALTH

Staff reporter

editorial@wakefieldexpress.co.uk
@WakeExpress

THEY EXPECTED life to change significantly after the birth of their first child, but not quite in the way it did.

After three months of concern following the birth of baby Lucy, Wakefield parents Michael and Caroline Rochford have finally found relief following a successful procedure that took just one minute.

When Lucy was born in June she immediately had problems with feeding. So much so that mum Caroline decided to change from breast-feeding to bottle-feeding in the first few days. But Lucy still suffered problems with colic and wind.

Michael said: "Caroline found it very painful trying to feed our baby. Lucy couldn't latch on properly and it was very distressing for both of them."

They took Lucy to see a GP, who diagnosed a small tongue-

tie. Michael added: "We were advised the procedure to correct it would not be available to Lucy under the NHS as she was bottle-feeding successfully. But we were still concerned."

Tongue-tie (or ankyloglossia) is a condition that affects the way the tongue moves in the mouth. For some babies, their

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frenulum – the cord-like strip of skin joining the underside of the tongue to the floor of the mouth is shorter than usual making it difficult to breast-feed. Tongue-tie affects around 4-11 per cent of newborn babies and is more common in boys than girls, and sometimes runs in families.

Signs of tongue-tie include gulping, making clicking noises and breaking suction while feeding because they cannot

latch on properly, causing distress for both mother and baby. In Lucy's case, the situation worsened to the point where her parents decided to do something about it. They called Spire Leeds Hospital and got an appointment with Gerard Kelly, a consultant ENT surgeon.

Mr Kelly said Lucy had a significant tongue-tie and he performed a quick one-minute procedure in out-patients.

He said: "The advantage of performing this procedure in babies is that the operation can be carried out in the office (or clinic). It's done without a general anaesthetic and it is quick. The baby is held by a parent or one of our nurses. The tongue is lifted and the frenulum is cut with sterile scissors and the tissues pushed apart to divide them. The best time is when the baby is just born when babies are less bothered by the procedure and breast-feeding issues may be resolved quickly."

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TONGUE TIE: Lucy, pictured before the procedure.