

# Myofunctional Therapy Offered at Edward-Elmhurst Healthcare

## What is Myofunctional Therapy?

Myofunctional therapy or orofacial therapy is a program used to correct the proper function and placement of the tongue and facial muscles at rest, during sleep, and during swallowing.

## Proper Tongue Placement

The act of swallowing is one function that depends on proper function. To swallow properly, muscles and nerves in the tongue, cheeks, and throat must work together. When a person swallows, the tip of the tongue presses firmly against the roof of the mouth or hard palate, located slightly behind the front teeth. The tongue acts as a starting point that allows other muscles involved in swallowing to function normally. The position of the tongue at rest may influence proper functioning patterns significantly.

Improper tongue placement may lead to:

- Serious dental problems
- Sleep apnea
- Speech disorders
- TMJ
- Headaches
- Stomach distress
- Posture problems
- Airway obstruction
- Other health changes

Factors that may cause improper oral muscle patterns:

- Enlarged adenoids/tonsils
- Allergies
- Tight frenulum
- Thumb/finger/pacifier sucking
- Improper tongue placement at rest

## How can myofunctional therapy help?

Orofacial therapy is painless and the exercises are fairly simple. When certain muscles are activated and functioning properly, other muscles will follow suit until proper coordination of the tongue and facial muscles is gained. Daily practice and consistent exercise is necessary until the patient has subconsciously corrected their improper muscle pattern. This takes constant commitment by the patient/parent and time. Treatment consists of a program of exercises over a 4-12 month period. There is a kit that corresponds with the program that will need to be purchased one time for \$80.

Please contact us with any further question or to schedule your appointment!

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