



# SPCA says... DON'T HURT YOUR DOGS BY CUTTING UNDER THEIR TONGUES

## “WORM” UNDER THE TONGUE IN DOGS

For many years there has been a belief in some cultures that there is a ‘worm’ that lives underneath the tongue of dogs. It is believed that if this ‘worm’ is cut out the dog will grow strong, get better if it is sick, put on weight if it is thin and be a good hunter.

Is there a ‘worm’ underneath the dog’s tongue?

**NO!!**

**There is not a worm under the tongue!**

The ‘worm’ story is not true and is an old myth - and it is time that we stop hurting dogs by cutting their tongues unnecessarily.

### So what IS under the tongue?

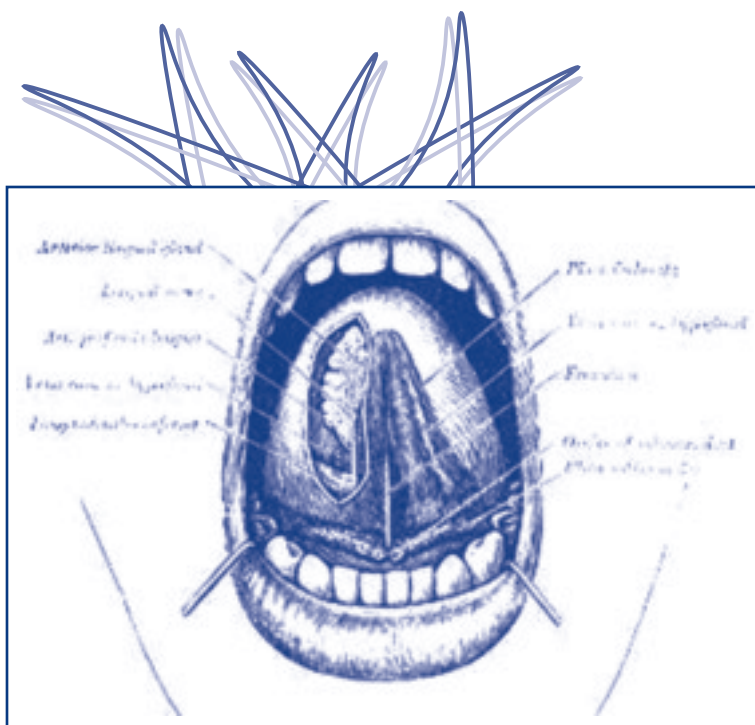
The ‘worm’ is in fact a band of tissue called a frenulum (pronounced fren-yuh-lum) that lies directly under the tongue to hold the tongue down.

People also have this piece of tissue under their tongues but it is not as well developed as in dogs. (See the picture above of a human’s mouth with the frenulum pointed out by the arrow.)

If you lift up your tongue in your own mouth it is very easy to feel this band of tissue with your finger.

The dog’s tongue is like a long muscle and is one of the most important parts of its body. Besides eating food and drinking water and responding to touch and pain, the tongue acts like a long fan to cool the dog down. When dogs exercise, their tongues become larger and due to the extra blood flow the tongue usually hang out of the mouth.

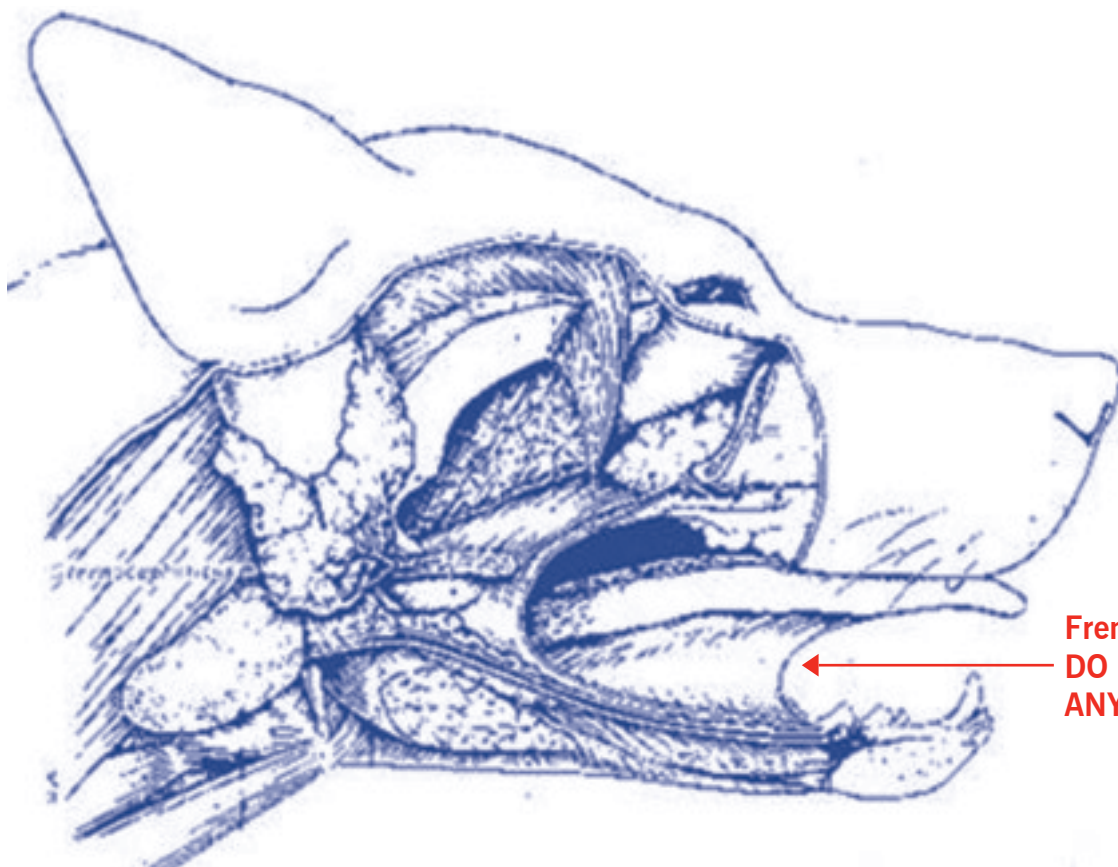
So, when a dog pants, it is actually cooling down its entire body. The dog’s quick shallow breaths cause moisture on the tongue to evaporate, cooling the tongue that in turn cools the blood flow through the tongue and the respiratory system.



Providing your dog with cool air on hot or humid days is very important to help control the dog's temperature.

This is why it is so dangerous to leave a dog in a closed car in warm or hot weather. The hot /warm air keeps the tongue from doing its job and can cause the dog to overheat and even die.

**Below is a picture of a dog's mouth also with the frenulum clearly visible.**



**Frenulum (NOT a worm)  
DO NOT CUT UNDER OR  
ANYWHERE ON THE TONGUE**

Just as we would not even consider cutting out the band of tissue (the frenulum) that holds our own tongue in place – so we must stop this terribly cruel practise of cutting out the band that does exactly the same thing in the dogs mouth.

The 'worm' under the tongue of dogs is an outdated myth and not true, and the removal of this 'worm' is both cruel and causes extreme pain to the animal in question.

In many cases it can result in the animal's death because without this band of tissue the dog's tongue cannot work properly and the dog can starve, dehydrate as a result of not being able to drink properly or even bleed to death.

**CUTTING A  
DOG'S TONGUE  
IS VERY CRUEL  
AND MUST  
NOT BE DONE**

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