

This leaflet provides some general advice and tips on how you can help your child to stop using a dummy.



It is hard for your child to talk with a dummy in their mouth. Not all babies or children need a dummy. However dummies can be useful to help young babies settle to sleep.

It's possible that using a dummy at the start of any sleep period reduces the risk of cot death. However, the evidence is not strong and not all experts agree that dummies should be used.

It is not recommended to give your baby a dummy until breastfeeding is well established, usually when they're around one month old¹.

When should I stop?

The younger your child is, the easier it is to wean them off the dummy.

It is recommended to stop giving your child the dummy when they're between 6 and 12 months old².



Why stop?

If your child continues to use the dummy as they get older it may increase the risk of:

- **Speech difficulties:** when a baby or young child has a dummy in their mouth they are less likely to copy sounds adults make or to attempt to babble and play with sounds themselves. This is important in the development of speech skills³.

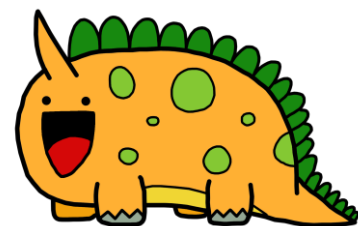


- Problems with how your child's teeth grow and develop which may need treatment with a brace when your child gets older⁴. The British Dental Health Foundation recommends avoiding the use of a dummy and discouraging thumb sucking.
- **Ear Infections:** sucking can allow bacteria into the middle ear from the nose³.



Advice and Tips

- Always take the dummy out when your child is making sounds and/or talking
- Only give your child the dummy when they are upset or settling to sleep
- Try other ways to comfort your child such as cuddling, reading or singing to your child instead of giving them a dummy
- Choose the right time for you and your child to give up the dummy, not when you are under pressure
- Choose the right way for you and your child to give up the dummy e.g. 'feed it to the dummy dinosaur', read books about it.



- If your child needs a dummy, an orthodontic type is best as it adapts to your child's mouth shape⁴.

Helping your child to stop using a dummy can be a daunting time for many families. Take one day at a time and try to stay positive and remember that it will get easier. You can do it!

For further information and advice please speak to your Speech and Language Therapist.

Useful websites

<http://www.designedtosmile.co.uk/home.html>

<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk>

<http://unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly>

References

1. <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/getting-baby-to-sleep.aspx#close>
2. <http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/document.doc?id=297>
3. <http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/parents/speech-and-language/do-dummies-affect-speech>
4. <http://www.dentalhealth.org>

Further Information

We hope you find this leaflet useful. If you need further information about the speech and language therapy service or would like to make any comments or suggestions, please visit our website or contact:-

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