

Dummies - good or bad?

Safety tip: Never put dummies in your mouth and then give it to your baby. You can pass on infections to your child this way.

When should I ask for help?

If you are worried or would like further information about using dummies, don't hesitate to contact your midwife or health visitor for advice.

Developed by Peterborough
Speech and Language Therapy
Children's Centres Team

A guide for
parents

PETERBOROUGH
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All babies cry... some cry a lot! Sucking is a natural and comforting thing for new babies to do, so parents may turn to a dummy to soothe their baby.

But can dummies do any harm?

Well, unfortunately the answer is yes.

- In some cases, introducing a dummy can upset breast feeding.
- Babies and toddlers who use their dummies a lot are more likely to have poor speech.
- Teeth can be damaged too.

So, if possible, try to find other ways to soothe your baby.

But there are some little ones who are hard to settle and seem to cry constantly.

This can be very stressful and if you find yourself in this position a lot of the time, a dummy may calm your baby down and may well preserve your sanity! So don't feel guilty about it.



- Some babies and toddlers are ready before others to give up their dummy altogether. Aim to get rid of it by the time the child is about 12 months, but by 3 years old at the very latest.

Make a clean break of it. Most children only fret for 2 or 3 days which, as long as you're prepared for it, isn't too bad.

Maybe s/he could give it to Santa for the baby reindeer in exchange for a present

Give it to the dummy fairy in exchange for a present. The dummy fairy gives it to new babies

Replace it with a new toy or blanket

Ditch it!



da da da da
da ma ma ma
ma ba ba ma
ma da aa ma



- As babies move their mouths and babble they are learning to make the mouth movements needed for speech.

The more practise they get the better their speech will be. Toddlers need to say some words lots of times before they can say them clearly.

Dummies in the mouth a lot of the time can prevent this happening, so try to keep the time your child uses the dummy to a minimum.

Always insist that your little one takes their dummy out of their mouth when they talk – even if they put it back in straight away.

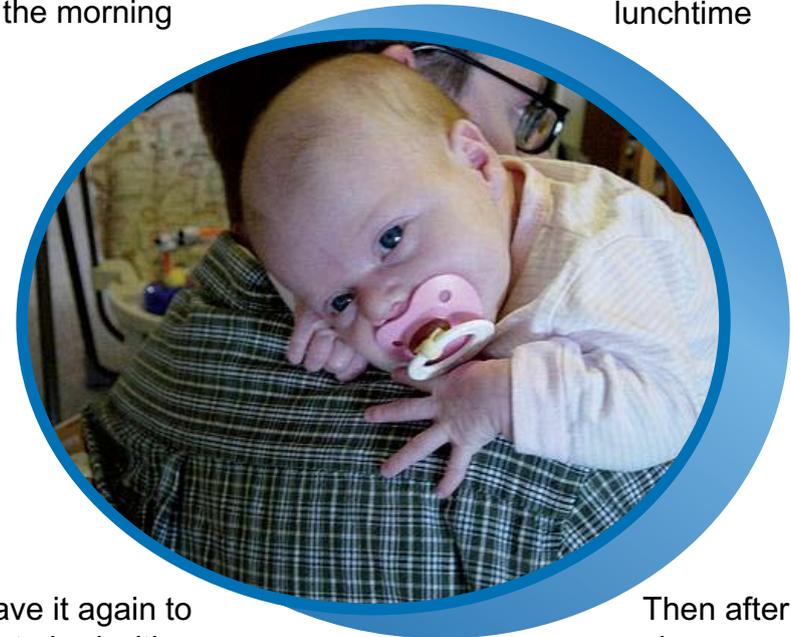
Chatter matters!

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- Try to get into a routine with the dummy so that s/he learns to have it at set times...

Maybe put it away once s/he wakes in the morning

Maybe have it for a little while at lunchtime



Have it again to go to bed with

Then after a sleep or a rest, put it away until tea time.

Limit it!

Safety tip: Dummies must be kept clean. They need to be sterilized in the same way as teats and bottles.

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- When you want your baby or toddler to go without their dummy during the day, hide it away (maybe in a high kitchen cupboard).

If it's out of reach and out of sight you have more chance of it being out of mind too! Make sure you hide all of them. Children sometimes have several dummies around the house.

Hide it!

- Be firm... babies want their dummies and some will try to get you to let them have it all the time. Don't give in. You'll be amazed how quickly they'll learn that you mean it.

It doesn't hurt a child to cry for a bit, just be on hand:

- Use a calming voice.
- Give some extra cuddles when your little one is upset while learning to cope without the dummy.
- Be ready with a special game or toy to distract him/her.

Be firm!

Safety tip: Dummies need to be renewed regularly. Damaged or broken dummies can cause choking.



The good news is that used with care, a dummy need not have a bad long term effect.

Just follow these simple guidelines...

- Use a dummy with an orthodontic teat. Dentists say they're better for the teeth than ordinary dummies. Choose one that's the right size for your child. (It will tell you the size on the packet.)



- Never dip the dummy in anything, particularly sweet, sugary things.

Don't dip it!

Safety tip: Don't attach it to a ribbon or string and then onto baby's clothing. The ribbon/string could choke your baby.

