

# Parent Guide



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## What is this resource and how do I use it?

This resource, based on the most recent research, provides information on dummies. Whether you have a new baby or you're desperate for your toddler to ditch the dummy, we've got you covered with this information sheet.

## What is the focus of this resource?

Dummies

Informed Choice

## Further Ideas and Suggestions

Understand more about baby teeth with this [Baby Teething Chart](#). Also, why not check out our [Weaning](#) category if you have a baby that is approaching weaning age?

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# Practical advice on giving up a dummy?

**Whether you choose to offer your baby a dummy is completely up to you - remember that you know them best. As babies have a strong natural reflex for sucking, dummies can be of comfort to them in their first few months of life.**

## When can I offer my baby a dummy?

If you'd like to offer your baby a dummy, it is best to wait until they are between four and six weeks old to allow breastfeeding to become established. An orthodontic dummy may be recommended if your baby is born prematurely as this can help your baby develop the sucking skills needed to feed by breast or bottle.

## How can I ensure safe dummy use?

- Sterilise dummies regularly.
- Check dummies for cracks, splitting or holes and dispose of them immediately if there are any signs of wear.
- Don't dip dummies in sweet foods or drinks, as this can lead to tooth decay.
- Never force your baby to take a dummy.
- Don't put a dummy back in if your baby spits it out.
- Avoid using dummy clips and accessories as these can cause strangulation.
- As your baby gets bigger, encourage them to remove their dummy when talking.

# Practical advice on giving up a dummy?

## Do dummies reduce the risk of SIDS?

Research has shown that dummies might prevent SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome), however the reasons for this remain unclear.

If you do choose to offer your baby a dummy, it's recommended that you do this consistently both at night time and during the day. If their dummy falls out while they are sleeping, avoid trying to put it back in.

## Saying Goodbye to the Dummy

It is recommended that babies stop using a dummy between 6 and 12 months of age. Reasons for this include the impact that a dummy has on your baby's speech, language development and teeth. It's also worth noting that it is easier to wean a baby off a dummy than it is a toddler in many instances.

Babbling and imitating sounds is how a baby learns to speak and a dummy can mean that they are less likely to do this resulting in delayed speech. If they do try to make sounds with a dummy in their mouth, their tongue movements may be limited which could lead to unclear speech.

Using a dummy once teeth have started to come through can have an impact on their positioning. Dummies dipped in sweet food and drinks can cause tooth decay, especially in the front teeth.

Dummies can often get dirty and become a breeding ground for bacteria which leads to infections such as middle ear infection.

# Practical advice on giving up a dummy?

## How can I encourage my child to give up their dummy?

Depending on how old your child is can depend on what will work best. Try the following:

- Gradually wean them off by reducing the time they can have their dummy each day.
- Restrict dummy use to key times, such as bedtime.
- Give the dummy away - they could offer it to Santa or maybe a close relation like a grandparent.
- Remind your child that older children don't have dummies - often toddlers love the idea of being grown up.
- Reward charts and stickers can be great motivation to ditch the dummy - avoid using food as an incentive.
- Swap the dummy for a cuddly toy or new book.
- Persevere! Try some or all of the things mentioned above and you will get there.

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