

Use and care of dummies (pacifiers)

Parents may choose to give their child a dummy to help settle them. Other settling techniques that can be used before trying a dummy include feeding, cuddling, patting, rocking, swaddling, checking the baby is clean and comfortably warm.

Dummies are not recommended while establishing breastfeeding because:

- ▶ It is important that the baby first learns to suckle correctly at the breast. A different type of suck is used on a dummy.
- ▶ Signs that the baby is ready to breastfeed (e.g. sucking lips/fingers and waking sounds) are likely to be missed if a dummy is used.
- ▶ Dummy use has been linked to:
 - » less time spent breastfeeding
 - » lower infant weight gain.
- ▶ The mouth actions used by a baby feeding at the breast promote optimal jaw and oral development and may prevent orthodontic and speech problems. Babies who suck on a dummy for prolonged periods may lose these benefits.

If you choose to use a dummy

It is important to:

- ▶ Offer a feed first, regardless of the time since the last feed.
- ▶ Wait until feeding is established (four to six weeks when breastfeeding) before offering a dummy.
- ▶ Remove the dummy once the baby is asleep.
- ▶ Keep the dummy clean and discard when showing signs of wear.
- ▶ Clean under a tap rather than putting them in an adult's mouth, which can transfer germs and thrush.
- ▶ Use a dummy that has an Australian Standards label, as others may have safety issues.

There is no scientific basis for claims that orthodontic teats and dummies are like a mother's breast.

Dummy do and don'ts

A baby's dummy should:

- ▶ Not replace a feed
- ▶ Only be put in one baby's mouth
- ▶ Be sterilised before use
- ▶ Never be sweetened or dipped in food or flavouring
- ▶ Never be tied around your baby's neck
- ▶ Fit the mouth comfortably
- ▶ Be discarded if cracked or damaged
- ▶ Be replaced regularly as necessary.

Care of a dummy

- ▶ Manufacturer's guidelines should be followed at all times.
- ▶ All babies need their dummy sterilised before use. To kill microbes (harmful bugs), bring water to the boil and simmer for five minutes. Do this daily.
- ▶ Air-dry the dummy and store in a clean sealed container.
- ▶ If your baby has thrush or some other infection, the dummy should be discarded and symptoms treated.

For more information speak to your health care professional

Contact

If you require a translator to do this, call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on **131 450** and give them the telephone number listed above.