



Steps to helping reduce dummy use.

Some young babies have a dummy to help them settle. Try to stop using a dummy by the time your baby is 10-12 months.

To prevent problems later:

- Give your child as much time without the dummy as possible.
- As your baby gets older, try to use the dummy for sleep times only.
- Don't put anything on the dummy to encourage sucking.



Remember:

- Babies who use dummies have fewer chances to babble and this will delay talking.
- Extended use of a dummy may contribute to dental problems affecting teeth, palate, mouth muscles and cause other problems such as drooling.
- Extended use of a dummy is likely to effect speech sound development.
- Use of dummies have also been linked to ear infections which can affect children's speech and language development even long after the infection has cleared up
- It's easier to wean a baby off a dummy than a toddler!
- Try not remove a dummy when they are experiencing another change, like starting nursery or having a new baby in the house.

If your baby has a dummy:

- Try to use it as little as possible.
- Always take the dummy out when your baby is babbling or chatting.

How do you get rid of a dummy?

If your child is using their dummy all the time, or is not giving their dummy up when you ask, try these ideas:

- **Wean them off** – gradually decrease the times when you let your child use their dummy.
- **Restrict dummy use** to key times during the day, such as bedtime or when your child is ill. Be consistent and firm.
- **Talk about it**; point out older girls and boys, who don't use dummies. Pre-schoolers love being more grown-up!
- **Encourage** your child to give all their dummies away to a person who is important to them, such as a grandparent or pre-school key worker.
- **Reward** your child with fun activities, stickers or star charts – don't give them sweets instead of their dummy.
- **Distract** them when they ask for it, offer them a choice instead – to go for a walk, play a game or share a book.
- **Be consistent**; remember over time your child will become less reliant on their dummy.

Ideas that parents have tried:

- Store all the dummies in a place out of sight and reach of your child.
- Keep them in the room where they can be used ie. their bedroom, rather than bags and pockets.
- Give the dummy to Santa or the Tooth Fairy.
- Swap the dummy for a gift, cuddly toy or new toothbrush.
- Try other ways to sooth them, offer them a choice such as lullaby, gentle massage, soft music or special teddy.
- If your child is struggling to give up their dummy, ask for help from a Health Visitor.