



Dummies - what you should know



Crying – before giving your baby their dummy, try and find out if there is anything wrong that you can fix! They might just be bored or need a cuddle. Try giving them a hug, or a toy/book instead.

Dummies don't help with teething; your child needs to explore toys in their mouths and may get comfort from this when teething. Try a teething ring, especially a cold one from the freezer, for your teething child.

Without a dummy your child can practice moving their tongue around their mouths which will allow them to babble, make sounds, and say words without an obstruction in their way. Your child's teeth will have plenty of room to grow properly if their dummy is not always there.

Your child will start experimenting more with making sounds at around 6 months old, so the current advice is to stop giving them their dummy when they're between 6 and 12 months.

Have clear rules and routines for when your child has their dummy and stick to these, your child will adjust and learn when these times are e.g., bedtimes.

Remember: If your child is unwell, they may need more dummy time for comfort – this is okay! Just remember to go back to the normal routine when they are better.

If your child has a dummy in their mouth for long periods of time it can affect how their teeth grow. Teeth need room to grow down and if there is an obstruction like a dummy then teeth may begin to grow around it. This will lead to problems with speaking, pronunciation, and can cause your child to dribble more than usual. Speak to your dentist if you are worried about your child's teeth growth.

When it is time for your child's dummy to go you can make it into an activity for you and your child. Some ideas for this are putting the dummy under your child's pillow for the 'dummy fairy' to collect, planting the dummy in the garden or a plant pot, or giving the dummy to Santa.

To pronounce sounds like t, d, l, s, p, and b your child's tongue needs to reach the front of their mouth. A child often having a dummy in their mouth when talking, or learning to talk, stops the tongue from reaching this area which can lead to trouble making these sounds.