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Healthy child, healthy future
Public Health Agency
Department of Health, Social Care and Sport

Dummies and talking

Some parents choose to give their child a dummy, some choose not to. However, if you give your baby a dummy, it's very easy for them to become a habit, even by the time the child has reached 12 months old.

Advantages

- A dummy can be used to comfort a baby that is hard to settle (please note that if the baby is distressed, it is important to comfort them without introducing a dummy).

Disadvantages

- Dummy sucking may cause dental problems, mouth infections and ear infections.
- Dummy use makes it difficult for your child to talk.

Remember

- Do not let the dummy stay in your child's mouth for long periods of time.
- Do not secure the dummy in your child's mouth - this could lead to choking.
- Never give a dummy to a baby under 12 months.
- Do not dip the dummy in sweet, sugary foods or drinks - this may lead to tooth decay.
- Never let your child talk with a dummy in his mouth.
- Avoid giving a dummy to a child as it may affect your child's speech sound production and may lead to speech problems.
- Do not give a dummy to a child who is sleeping.

Guidelines for stopping dummy use

- Prepare the child to stop using the dummy - talk about getting rid of it.
- Choose a good time to give up the dummy, eg over a weekend and when you and your partner are not working.
- Never give the dummy back to the child once you have said it has gone.
- Your child could give their dummy away in return for a small present.

If you have any concerns, please contact your health visitor or a speech and language therapist.

This factsheet gives advice to parents on the use of dummies and their effect on a child's speech.

Details

Format

A4 factsheet

Target group

Parents

Downloads

Attachment	Size
Handout Ask about dummies 02_19.pdf	443.48 KB

Tags

- [speech and language](#)
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