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**Dump That Dummy!**



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The Dummy as a Soother

1. Most young babies do have a strong sucking reflex and there is no doubt that a comforter can help to soothe the child.
2. Some babies do need a comforter. This can be a dummy, their thumb, finger or piece of cloth. A dummy is preferable to a thumb or finger as it can be taken away at a later date. Many older children still suck their thumb when they wouldn’t suck a dummy.

**Uses and Abuse of Dummies**

-A child may need a dummy as a comforter but it should be removed as soon as the child has settled.

-Babies should not be left with dummies in their mouths for long periods of time.

-Orthodontic dummies are preferred.

-Dummies should be removed altogether when approximately nine months old.

-Dummies should never be dipped into any sweet substance e.g honey, jam etc.

-Dummies should always be sterilised before use. Adults should never put the dummy into their own mouths before giving it to the baby.

-A baby should never be left sleeping with a dummy in their mouth.

 **Damage Caused By Overuse of Dummies**

Dental Problems

Most Dentists agree that overuse of dummies can prevent proper development (alignment and soft tissue) of gums and teeth.

Speech Problems

Speech Therapists have agreed that overuse of dummies can also prevent the proper control of the tongue resulting in speech problems, which can, in some cases, be severe.

Your child should not be sucking a dummy or bottle at this stage i.e Nursery School Age, so please help us to help your child give them up

**Tips for HELPING YOUR CHILD TO GIVE UP HIS/HER DUMMY**

When you’re ready to stop or reduce your child’s use of a dummy, the following ideas can help.

* Take some pressure off by reminding yourself that sucking a dummy never becomes a lifelong habit. Many children will stop using a dummy by themselves.
* Choose your timing. A period of change or stress for you or your child might not be a good time to give up.
* Talk to your child about giving up the dummy, if your child is old enough to understand.
* When you and your child are ready, begin by restricting dummy use to certain times and places, such as in the car or cot. This gives your child a chance to get used to being without the dummy.
* Encourage the use of other comforters such as a blanket or teddy, if these are more socially acceptable.
* Once your child is coping for longer periods without the dummy, set a time and date – then take away the dummy.
* Mark the occasion of becoming dummy-free with a celebration or special reward.
* Finally, **try not to turn back**. No matter how well you have prepared your child for this change, expect some discomfort and some protest.

