

Use and care of dummies (pacifiers)

Babies under 12 months need their dummy sterilised before use.

It is not recommended that you use a dummy in the first few weeks if you have a healthy, term baby because:

- Your baby needs to learn to breastfeed first. Using a dummy in the first weeks can affect a baby's ability to suck on the breast which may slow your milk production.
- You may miss your baby's hunger signs (e.g. sucking lips/fingers and waking sounds) if your baby has a dummy in their mouth. This may mean your baby gains weight more slowly.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE A DUMMY:

- Wait until your baby is about four weeks old before giving a dummy.
- See if your baby would like a feed first before giving a dummy, even if they have only recently had a feed.
- Try feeding, cuddling, patting, rocking, swaddling and check your baby is clean and warm before trying the dummy.

- Remove the dummy once your baby is asleep.
- A dummy is not like a mother's breast, despite the claims of different brands.
- The mouth actions used by a breastfeeding baby promotes optimal jaw and oral development. A dummy does not.

IMPORTANT POINTS

Your baby's dummy should:

- NOT replace a feed
- Only be put in YOUR baby's mouth
- NEVER be sweetened or dipped in any food or flavouring
- Be inspected under light regularly for faults
- NEVER be tied around your baby's neck
- Fit the mouth comfortably. Use age guidelines for sizing.

CARE OF A DUMMY

- Follow manufacturer's guidelines at all times.
- To kill harmful bugs, bring water to the boil and simmer for five minutes.
- Older babies can have their dummy washed with warm, soapy water and rinsed well.
- Air-dry the dummy and store in a clean, sealed container.
- If your baby has thrush or some other infection, throw the dummy away and treat the symptoms.
- Dummies need to be kept clean and thrown out when they show signs of wear.
- Clean under a tap and not in an adult's mouth. This can transfer germs.
- Only use a dummy that has an Australian Standards label.

Contacts

- Your local Maternity Unit.
- Your Child and Family Health Centre.
- Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline
Ph: 1800 686 268, 7 days a week, or visit www.breastfeeding.asn.au
- For a Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)
www.lcanz.org/find-a-consultant.htm
- MotherSafe (Medications in Pregnancy & Lactation Service)
Ph: (02) 9382 6539 or 1800 647 848 if outside the Sydney Metropolitan area. Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm.
- After-hours telephone advice lines are listed in your baby's *Personal Health Record* (Blue Book).
- See NSW Health Preparing formula feeds and sterilising bottles factsheet for step-by-step sterilisation instructions.

References

Jaafar SH, Jahanfar S, Angolkar M, et al. (2011) Pacifier use versus no pacifier use in breastfeeding term infants for increasing duration of breastfeeding (Review). The Cochrane Collaboration.

Eat for Health, NHMRC Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers 2012.