



Thumbs, Fingers, and Pacifiers



Why do kids suck their thumbs or pacifiers?

- Provides security in early life and is NORMAL

Are pacifiers a bad idea for a baby?

- NO! They do not cause any medical or psychological problem
- If your baby wants to suck beyond nursing/bottle feeding, this satisfies the need
- HOWEVER – pacifiers should NOT replace or delay feedings

*****NEVER TIE A PACIFIER AROUND BABY'S NECK OR HAND, OR TO THE CRIB*****

(This is dangerous and could result in serious injury or death)

When to stop?

- Most children will stop sucking on their own
- By 6–8y old kids succumb to peer pressure or can better control their behavior resulting in cessation of the habit
- Ideally, the habit should stop after 3y old and definitely before permanent teeth erupt
Otherwise – these habits can affect permanent tooth eruption and the shape of your child's mouth
- The longer the habit persists, the more likely there will be adverse consequences to the teeth

How to stop?

- Ignore the habit and it most likely will disappear over time
- Harsh words/criticism could upset your child causing an increase in sucking
- Sucking (over 3y old) may be due to boredom
 - Get your child's attention with fun activities
 - Reward good behavior (star charts, daily rewards, praise)

If they don't stop?

- Consult your pediatric dentist/orthodontist for suggestions
- A mouth appliance that blocks the sucking habit may be indicated

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