

Parent Guide



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What is this resource and how do I use it?

There is no doubt that dummies provide swift comfort to babies and toddlers and are a really useful tool for some parents. However, if you're thinking about getting rid of your little one's dummy, this guidance contains useful ideas and researched-based information to support you through the transition when the time comes.

What is the focus of this resource?

Dummies

Parenting

Your Baby's Health

Further Ideas and Suggestions

We're here for you throughout your entire pregnancy, birth and beyond. Take a look at our **Parents' Hub** for more guidance and support or head over to our **Pregnancy and Baby** area for more content to support your 0 - 2-year-old.

Parents Blog



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Supporting Your Child in Getting Rid of Their Dummy



If your baby or toddler uses a dummy, they're likely really attached to it and the comfort it provides. For that reason alone, it can be difficult to know how to get rid of their dummy when the time comes. In this guide, we'll take a look at the benefits and disadvantages of using a dummy and how to help your child transition away from their dummy. Depending on how old your little one is, there are various ways you can encourage them to let it go.

What are the benefits of dummies?

- Research indicates that dummies might lower the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome) occurring if used consistently for sleep both during the day and at night, though the reasons for this aren't completely clear.
- Babies have a natural reflex for sucking so they can find dummies really comforting.
- It's been suggested that sucking on a dummy can provide relief from pain - particularly helpful if your baby suffers from colic, for example.

What are the disadvantages of using a dummy?

Some evidence suggests that dummies:

- can interfere with breastfeeding if your baby struggles to switch between the nipple and an artificial teat;
- may have a negative impact on speech development and clarity of speech as it restricts tongue movements and obstructs your baby from babbling and imitating sounds, which is how they acquire language;
- can impact the way teeth grow;
- can cause babies to dribble more;
- can cause ear infections;
- can transport bacteria, which can increase the rate and frequency of infection.

When should I get rid of my baby's dummy?

It's recommended that babies stop using their dummies between six and 12 months of age for the reasons outlined above. In addition to these factors, it's generally easier to wean a baby off their dummy than a toddler!

Supporting Your Child in Getting Rid of Their Dummy



How can I support my baby in letting go of their dummy?

This can be really tricky, especially if your little one is particularly attached to their dummy. Depending on their age, there are various methods you might consider. For younger babies, we'd suggest:

- weaning your baby off their dummy gradually by reducing the time they're allowed it each day;
- limiting dummy use to essential times, such as for naps or at bedtime;
- introducing a different sleep cue;
- providing your baby with extra cuddles and attention at times when they would usually need their dummy;
- exploring different ways of soothing your baby, such as skin-to-skin contact or baby-wearing;
- generally keeping dummies out of sight.

For older babies and toddlers, we'd suggest:

- giving the dummy away to a favourite character, teddy, 'dummy fairy', Santa or someone special to them;
- introducing books or stories about getting rid of dummies;
- swapping the dummy for a new soft toy;
- encouraging your toddler to take their dummy out when they talk to you;
- use a reward system - toddlers respond well to praise and encouragement.

Above all else, persevere with patience and consistency. It can be tough going but we promise you will get there!



Disclaimer: We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.