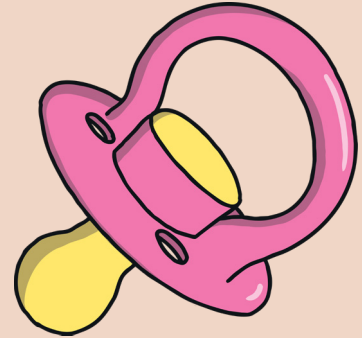


# Giving Up the Dummy

- As babies have a strong natural reflex for sucking, dummies are a comfort to them in their first few months of life.
- When babies begin to be weaned onto semi-solid food, they learn how to chew. Around this time, they also start to explore other different movements that they can make with their mouths.
- If a child has a dummy over the age of 12 months, it may:
  - reduce how clear their speech is;
  - affect the way their teeth grow;
  - cause ear infections;
  - increase the amount that they dribble, as they will find it hard to put their lips together and swallow.



## Tips for When Using a Dummy

- Make sure that it is sterilised before use.
- Never dip it anything sweet, such as sugar or jam, as this can lead to tooth decay.
- Wait for your child to ask for the dummy (with gestures or by looking at it) before you give it to them rather than automatically giving it to them.
- Remove it first if your child wants to talk. Talking with the dummy in, may lead to difficulties saying some sounds.

When the time comes to give up the dummy, it must be the 'right' time for you as parents/carers. It needs a consistent approach so think about when the time is going to be, e.g. over the weekend/over the holidays. When you have made the decision to take away the dummy, collect all the dummies from around the house - remember to check everywhere, including in beds, under sofas and in toy boxes. Once all the dummies have been collected, throw them in the bin so that you are not tempted to go back to using them.



## Ideas for Giving Up the Dummy

- Leave it for the 'dummy fairy'. Place it under the child's pillow and exchange it for a shiny coin.
- Exchange it for a present from the dummy fairy, Father Christmas or the Easter bunny.
- Create a 'dummy tree'. Collect all the dummies you may have around the house and plant them in the garden to see if they grow into a 'dummy tree'.



There are a range of children's books that focus on giving up the dummy:

- The Last Noo-Noo by Jill Murphy
- Ben gives up his Dummy By Jenny Alburn
- Bea gives up her Dummy by Jenny Alburn
- Florrie the Dummy Fairy by Anthony J. Crosbie
- I Want My Dummy! by Tony Ross

