

Information for Parents and Carers of Children Who Use Dummies and Bottles

**Community & Therapy Services
Children & Young People's Therapy Team
Speech & Language Therapy Department
Community Dental**

**This leaflet has been designed to
give you important information
and to answer some common
queries you may have.**

Information for parents and carers

Background

For parents and carers, the most important advantage of the use of dummies is their role in helping babies settle down to sleep or to soothe them. Some studies show that dummies can help establish good sucking patterns in very young babies, especially those born prematurely. Letting a baby have a dummy as an occasional comforter is fine, as is giving him his formula milk in a bottle.

BUT

Toddlers and older children don't need dummies at all and shouldn't be encouraged to carry a bottle around with them or use one continuously throughout the day. Other concerns about ongoing use of dummies include:

- Dental problems. The Oral Health Foundation discourages the long-term use of dummies or thumb sucking as both could result in problems as the teeth grow and develop, particularly when their permanent teeth are coming through
- Tooth decay, especially when dipping dummies in syrup or jam or giving fruit juice or sugary drinks in bottles
- Increased risk of stomach and mouth infections
- Reduction in babble and sound play. When a baby or young child has a dummy in their mouth they are less likely to copy sounds adults make or to attempt to babble and play with sounds themselves. This is important in the development of speech skills
- Not being able to pronounce some speech sounds properly. This may impact the way your child talks
- Poor speech and language development due to reduced opportunities to practice talking if there is a dummy or bottle in their mouth

General Advice

- Try to wean your child off a dummy when he starts to babble or at least by 12-18 months of age. Follow your health visitor's advice about introducing a trainer cup for milk and other drinks
- Use a flat teat rather than cherry teat and check it is for the appropriate age of your child as this has less effect on teeth
- Never use bottles for sweet / sugary drinks (e.g. fruit juice, squash, pop) or let your child walk around, sit in his pram or lie down with a bottle in his mouth
- Do not leave a bottle in cot with baby to suck on during night as this can cause tooth decay even with milk
- If you really can't make a clean break, limit the use of the dummy to bedtime or when your child is ill

Information for parents and carers

- Prepare your child by reading books about getting rid of the dummy try:
'The last Noo-Noo' by Jill Murphy or 'No More Dummy' by Bernette Ford and Sam Williams
- Giving the dummy or bottle to the 'dummy fairy'. This may help to make a clean break especially if in return for a small present. Some supermarkets and Family Hubs have a dummy tree where your child can hang their dummy
- If you feel your child needs to give up their dummy in stages, limit the use of the dummy to bedtimes at first. Have a special place where the dummy goes when your child gets out of bed – such as a box or bag
- Soothe and Remove – As a last resort, if your child is extremely distressed let them have the dummy to soothe them, and then remove the dummy. Do not leave it in their mouth

Don't Worry

Your child may fret to begin with but will soon forget about the dummy or bottle, particularly if you try and keep them busy and distracted for a few days.

Dummies and Sleeping

There is research to suggest that using a dummy when putting a baby down to sleep may reduce the risk of sudden infant death. The Lullaby Trust advises:

- Don't force your baby to use a dummy or tie it on to baby using a cord
- If you choose to use a dummy make sure it is part of your child's regular sleep routine
- Stop giving a dummy to your baby to go to sleep between 6 and 12 months

Where can I get help?

If your child is finding it difficult to give up their dummy or bottle, contact your local Family Hub / Children's Centre, health visitor for more ideas and support.

Other Information

Useful websites include:

- <http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/>
- <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/>

Things Parents Have Told Us

'It wasn't as bad as I thought; I just decided it had to go'

'He has started talking now so we have gotten rid of the dummy'

'After a few nights he stopped asking for the dummy'



Information for parents and carers

Community Clinics

Immingham Children's Centre, Eastfield School, Margaret Street, Immingham.

A clinic is also held at the Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby. This is held in the Speech and Language Therapy Department. Tel: 03033 303758

For Scunthorpe and surrounding area: Monarch House Tel: 01724 203755

Parking

If your appointment is to attend the Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital, you will need to pay for parking.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service offers confidential advice, support and information on any health related matters.

If you have a comment, concern, complaint or compliment about the care or service you have received from the Trust you can contact the PALS team as follows:

Telephone: 03033 306518

Email: nlq-tr.PALS@nhs.net

There are also offices at both the Diana Princess of Wales Hospital (near the main entrance) and Scunthorpe General Hospital (on the C Floor, near the outpatient department), should you wish to visit.

Please note: PALS should not be contacted for clinical advice relating to the content of this leaflet. The service should be contacted directly in the first instance.

Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

Diana Princess of Wales Hospital
Scarcho Road
Grimsby
DN33 2BA

Scunthorpe General Hospital
Cliff Gardens
Scunthorpe
DN15 7BH

Goole & District Hospital
Woodland Avenue
Goole
DN14 6RX

03033 306999

www.nlg.nhs.uk

Date of Issue: May, 2018

Review Period: May, 2021

Author: Speech & Language Therapy Dept.

IFP-1022

© NLGFT 2018

