

If a child has a dummy over the age of 12 months, it may:

stop the full range of tongue movements that are needed for some speech sounds: this can have long term effects

get in the way when your child is babbling and practicing the sounds they need for talking

increase the amount that they dribble, as they will find it hard to put their lips together and swallow

affect the way their teeth grow

cause ear infections

If your child uses a dummy:

- Make sure that it is clean/sterilised before use.
- Never dip it in anything sweet, such as sugar or jam, as this can lead to tooth decay.
- Remove it first if your child wants to talk. Talking with the dummy in may lead to difficulties saying some sounds.
- Gradually reduce the use of a dummy and limit its use to key times, e.g. for sleep or when they are ill.
- Try giving an alternative comforting object like a favourite soft toy or a small blanket.
- Lots of cuddles, reassurance or singing their favourite tune may also help to settle your little one without the need for a dummy.
- Be consistent and stay strong. There may be tricky moments, but they will pass.

Top Tips for Giving Up the Dummy



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Giving Up the Dummy

(for children who are 12 months +)



During a baby's early months, a dummy can be really helpful to comfort and settle them. 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. Using a dummy beyond 12 months can impact on this development and have lasting effects.



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. Get rid of all the dummies at once so that you are not tempted to go back to using them. You could:

- Leave it for the 'dummy fairy'. Place it under the child's pillow and exchange it for a gift.
- 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 Album
- Bea gives up her Dummy by Jenny Album
- Florrie the Dummy Fairy by Anthony J. Crosbie
- I Want My Dummy! by Tony Ross