



# Pacifiers

As a parent, you need to make an informed decision about whether you will offer your child a pacifier. Reading the information below will help you to make this decision.

## Disadvantages

- Pacifiers can cause problems with breastfeeding and have been linked with decreased breastfeeding duration.
- Offering a pacifier could interfere with you being able to detect your baby's feeding cues. This could lead to your baby not being fed often enough, which could impact your baby's growth.
- Pacifiers tied around baby's neck are not safe and could lead to injury or death.
- Incorrect use of a pacifier could lead to problems with tooth and speech development and ear infections.

## Don'ts

- × Don't use a pacifier instead of feeding baby. Using a pacifier can hide early hunger cues.
- × Don't dip a pacifier in honey, corn syrup, sugar, or anything sweet. This can lead to preventable tooth decay. Giving honey to a child under one year of age is not recommended due to the risk of botulism.
- × Don't tie anything around your baby's neck as this could cause strangulation and death. Clips with short ribbons are safe to use and can be found where you purchase pacifiers.
- × Don't put baby's pacifier in your mouth to clean it. This can spread decay-causing bacteria from parent to child.
- × Don't let an older child crawl or walk with a pacifier for long periods. This could interfere with speech development and cause problems with developing teeth.

## Advantages

- Research suggests that using a pacifier may decrease the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). However, studies also show that breastfeeding reduces the risk of SIDS, and offering a pacifier may cause breastfeeding issues.
- Sucking on a pacifier causes fewer issues with future tooth development than sucking on a finger or thumb. A parent can control the use of a pacifier.
- Babies who are sick or premature may benefit from additional sucking. Speak with your health care provider or lactation consultant for information.

## Do's

- √ Do avoid giving a pacifier until breastfeeding is well established. Giving a pacifier too early can interfere with breastmilk supply, cause feeding cues to be missed, and can cause confusion between the breast and the pacifier.
- √ Do check if baby has all his or her needs met before offering a pacifier. Your baby may be hungry, tired, hot, cold, or need a diaper change.
- √ Do try soothing baby before offering a pacifier. Skin-to-skin, carrying, holding, or offering a clean finger to suck may be helpful.
- √ Do sterilize the pacifier in boiling water for 5 minutes before the first use and as needed afterward to prevent the spread of bacteria.
- √ Do replace the pacifier every 2 months and if damaged.
- √ Do use the appropriate size of pacifier. If it is too small or large, baby could choke.