

# THUMBSUCKING AND DUMMIES



## Dummy do's and don'ts

- ✓ Have plenty of spare, clean dummies on hand.
- ✓ Sterilize or clean dummies in the dishwasher or in hot, soapy water.
- ✓ Wean the dummy before the permanent (adult) teeth start to appear.
- ✗ Don't clean a dropped dummy by licking it or "cleaning" it in your mouth. Sharing saliva with children can increase the risk of tooth decay if a parent/caregiver has untreated tooth decay in their own mouth.
- ✗ Never dip the dummy in sweet substances, such as honey, jam or condensed milk. This increases the risk of tooth decay.

**Aim to give up the dummy or thumbsucking by 4**

**Talk to a dental practitioner if you are concerned about your child's dummy or thumbsucking habit**



## Young children often suck on dummies or their thumbs or fingers for comfort

- If the habit is stopped before the adult teeth appear, it will not normally cause problems.
- Continued dummy or thumbsucking as the permanent adult teeth appear can cause problems with alignment of the teeth or jaws.

## Tips for changing habits

- Only give the dummy at sleep time
- Remove the dummy once the child is asleep
- Discourage children from walking around with a dummy or thumb in his/her mouth
- Set a date with your child to give up the habit, e.g. by fourth birthday. Use positive reinforcement.



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