

## Use of Dummies

Inappropriate and prolonged use of dummies can lead to a range of problems which can have a long term impact on speech development:

- Malformations of the dental arch
- Tooth decay
- Incorrect tongue position is adopted which may affect the swallowing pattern
- Increase in dribbling as the child is prevented from effecting a seal with the lips
- The baby is unable to engage in normal babble patterns as the dummy restricts tongue movements.
- Normal sensory feedback is inhibited
- The young child is unable to communicate as the dummy acts as a plug.
- The correct placement for developing speech sounds is restricted.
- The child becomes addicted to the dummy and it becomes increasingly difficult to wean them off as they get older. This can result in stress for both child and parent.

It is essential that children are encouraged to communicate without having their dummy in their mouth. If they are speaking to you encourage them to give you their dummy rather than to speak round the dummy. Perhaps encourage them to leave their dummy in their bedroom and encourage them to use it only at night time rather than during the day.

When trying to encourage a child to give up a dummy it can sometimes be helpful to give it to a character in exchange for a motivating toy or game e.g. 'the dummy fairy', 'the Easter bunny' or 'Father Christmas'.

Taken from advice given by Speech and Language Therapists in South West Surrey.  
More information available on [www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk)

For advice on using dummies with very young babies please speak to your Midwife, Health Visitor or Speech and Language Therapist.

Further advice and research findings can be found at  
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/getting-baby-to-sleep.aspx>

<http://fsid.org.uk/page.aspx?pid=426>