

## Help us get it right

If you have a complaint, concern, comment or compliment please let us know by speaking to a member of our staff. We learn from your feedback and use the information to improve and develop our services.

If you would like to talk to someone outside the service contact the **Patient Experience Team** on **0113 220 8585**, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm or email [lch.pet@nhs.net](mailto:lch.pet@nhs.net)

**We can make this information available in Braille, large print, audio or other languages on request.**

## Further information and contacts

For further information or to discuss any concerns you may have about your child's communication please contact your 0-19 Specialist Public Health Nurse (formerly known as a health visitor) or GP or local speech and language therapist:



## Useful websites

[www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk)

[www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk)

[www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk](http://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk)

# Dummy wise



**Advice to parents of babies over one year old**

Produced by **The Leeds Speech and Language Therapy Service**  
Building communication skills for life

Dummies can be useful, helping soothe babies to sleep and giving them security. Research has shown that use of a dummy can reduce the risk of cot death in babies up to 12 months **but...**

**...toddlers and older children don't need a dummy during the day**

**For children over one year, use of a dummy can lead to:**



### Speech problems

Because the dummy is in the way, speech sounds may be made in the wrong place in your child's mouth. This can make speech difficult to understand and cause some speech sound difficulties.



### Communication problems

If your baby is using a dummy he will be less likely to smile, babble or chat with you and you will have fewer chances to smile, babble and talk back to him. It takes two to talk!



### Dental problems

Dummy use can affect the position of teeth as they grow.



### Health problems

A dummy going from the floor straight into your child's mouth can lead to infection and tummy upsets. Children who use dummies are also more likely to get ear infections.



### Feeding difficulties

Using a dummy may delay the development of chewing skills.



### Dribbling

A dummy can make it difficult for your child to close his/her mouth and swallow properly. This means he/she may dribble more and get a sore chin.

## How to be 'dummy wise'

- Use the dummy as little as possible e.g. at sleep time only.
- Always remove your child's dummy when he/she is making noises, talking or playing.
- When your child is upset, try to find out why and distract him/her with something else instead of giving the dummy.
- Never dip the dummy into anything sweet - this leads to tooth decay.
- Don't 'clean' the dummy in your own mouth - this can pass germs to your child.

**Aim to wean your child off the dummy during the day by approximately 12 months – the sooner you break the habit, the easier it will be!**



## Tips to help you both break the habit

- If you want to make a clean break, carefully choose a time when you and your child are well and happy. Be prepared for your child to be upset for a few days, but try to be strong and not give the dummy back!
- Don't replace the dummy with a bottle - babies should start using a cup from 6 to 12 months old.
- Make sure that family and friends know what you're trying to do or they might undo all your hard work.
- Try to explain to an older child that dummies are only for babies.
- Leave the dummy at home when you go out.
- Swap the dummy for a special toy or present.
- Say you're going to give the dummy to Santa or the Dummy Fairy.
- There are books written for children about giving up dummies - ask at your local library e.g. 'The Last Noo-Noo' by Jill Murphy.