

Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles



Helping Children Stop Using a Pacifier

Sucking on pacifiers is a normal reflex for infants and toddlers. Long term use of pacifiers can affect your child's bite and the growth of the jaws and bones that support their teeth. If your child shows no interest in giving up their pacifier by 18 months, they may need help to stop.



Here are some ways to help your child stop using their pacifier:

- **Talk to your child.** Tell your child why you want them to stop using their pacifier. Say to them you believe they can stop.
- **Take the pacifier away gradually.** Let your child use it only at certain times, like naptime or bedtime. Slowly increase the amount of time that your child isn't using a pacifier.
- **Reward your child.** For each day they don't use their pacifier, put a star on the calendar. At the end of an agreed upon time period, give them a non-food reward, like a trip to the park.
- **Encourage your child to throw their pacifier away.** If your child asks for it, remind them that they threw it away. Tell your child they're a big kid, and big kids don't use pacifiers.
- **Trade the pacifier.** Ask your child to put the pacifier under their pillow. Tell them the pacifier fairy or someone else will take the pacifier while they sleep and leave a gift instead. If your child asks for the pacifier, remind them they traded it for a gift.
- **Poke holes in the pacifier.** Use a clean pin to make the holes. If the pacifier has holes in it, it won't feel good for your child to suck on.



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