



From the desk of Dr Harry

Using pacifiers/dummies to soothe your baby

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A pacifier or dummy can be a very useful tool to help soothe your baby, satisfying their natural instinct to suck.

The American Academy of Pediatrics position statement offers these guidelines for new parents:

- It's OK to give baby a pacifier/dummy to help soothe, but don't offer it when your baby wants to eat.
- Try several types of pacifiers/dummies to see what your baby likes.
- Babies may not accept a pacifier/dummy at first, but try offering it several times.
- Gently rub the side of your baby's mouth and hold the pacifier/dummy so your baby doesn't spit it out.
- Don't worry if your baby doesn't want a pacifier/dummy at all.

In addition I'd like to add:

- Pacifiers/dummies are useful in first 6 months of your baby's life. They are like a nipple substitute and fulfill your baby's innate need to suck.
- Beyond 6 months of age, however, pacifiers/dummies are no longer needed.
- After 6 months, you should replace your baby's pacifier/dummy with a security object (such as a soft toy or special blanket). Security objects are mother substitutes, as opposed to nipple substitutes.
- Security objects are particularly useful over the preschool years, but can still remain meaningful for many, many years, children leaving them in a cupboard or draw, knowing they can always be accessed at times of stress.

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