

What you need to know about pacifiers



Pacifiers (soothers) can cause problems breastfeeding.

For your child's health, we recommend the following:

- Breastfeeding your child until 6 months of age;
- Continuing breastfeeding even after you introduce solid food (up to 2 years of age or over).

If you're thinking about giving your baby a pacifier, know the possible effects.

Using a pacifier:

- Can reduce your milk production;
- Can slow your baby's weight gain;
- Is linked to stopping breastfeeding early;
- Can reduce your baby's desire to breastfeed;
- Can cause chronic ear infections;
- Increases the risk of cavities and language problems if continued too long;
- Can cause suffocation if used incorrectly;
- Can spread germs if not cleaned properly.

ADVICE

Don't use a pacifier if:

- Your baby is having trouble latching on to breastfeed;
- Your baby is having trouble gaining weight;
- Your nipples are injured or painful;
- You're having trouble producing enough milk;
- You or your baby has thrush;
- Your baby is having repeated ear infections.

To calm your baby:

- Keep them in skin-to-skin contact;
- Offer to breastfeed;
- Hold them in your arms;
- Walk around with them or rock them;
- Let them suck on your finger (make sure it is clean);
- Talk to them or sing them songs;
- Change their diaper if it's wet or dirty;
- Change their clothing if they seem to be too hot or too cold.

If you still decide to give your baby a pacifier:

- Wait until they're at least 1 month old. Your milk production will be better established. Introducing a pacifier too early can cause problems breastfeeding;
- Make sure your baby isn't hungry or tired, that their diaper is clean, and that they're not too hot or too cold before you give them a pacifier.
- Check the pacifier every day to ensure its texture hasn't changed and that it doesn't have any cracks or holes;
- Replace the pacifier at least every two months rather than waiting for it to deteriorate;
- Replace the pacifier with a teething ring if your baby starts to chew;
- Sterilize the pacifier before using it for the first time (boil it in water for two minutes and let it cool completely before giving it to your baby). After each use, wash it with hot soapy water.