Baby bottles, artificial nipples and pacifiers: **What you need to know**

A pacifier can help comfort your baby. However, using a pacifier too often or for too long can affect your baby's health.



PACIFIERS CAN SOMETIMES CAUSE PROBLEMS

They can:

- **Hide the signs that your baby is hungry;**
- **Make your baby feed less often or miss feedings;**
- **Reduce breast stimulation and decrease milk production;**
- **Make some babies gain less weight;**
- **Spread germs if the pacifier isn't washed properly;**
- **Increase the risk of dental problems, ear infections and delays in learning to talk when used for too long.**

PACIFIERS CAN SOMETIMES BE HELPFUL

They can:

- **Soothe your baby if you're not breastfeeding or if you're separated from your baby. If you breastfeed, breastfeeding often works better because it combines close contact, suckling and breast milk;**
- **Reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). If you breastfeed, breastfeeding by itself gives your baby important protection;**
- **Help premature babies learn to suckle.**

Tips for calming your baby without using a pacifier:

- Hold your baby skin-to-skin;
- Put your baby to the breast;
- Rock your baby;
- Use a baby carrier;
- Talk or sing softly to your baby;
- Change your baby's diaper if it's wet or soiled;
- Change your baby's clothes if they are too hot or too cold.

Using baby bottles and artificial nipples

Milk often flows faster from a bottle than from the breast. Your baby may prefer a faster milk flow, which can make breastfeeding more difficult. Also, your baby may drink too fast and get more milk than they need.

If you decide to use a baby bottle, an artificial nipple or a pacifier:

- Wait until breastfeeding is well established, usually when your baby is 4 to 6 weeks old;
- Breastfeed your baby often to keep a good milk supply;
- If you bottle-feed your baby, go at your baby's pace (paced bottle feeding).

Tips for using and cleaning a pacifier:

- Before using it for the first time, boil the pacifier for 5 minutes to sterilize it;
- After each use, wash the pacifier with hot, soapy water and let it air dry;
- Make sure the pacifier isn't "cracked." If it is damaged, throw it out. Replace it every 2 months;
- Don't put the pacifier in your mouth to "clean" it, as this can spread germs to your baby.

For more information see the following pages:

Pacifiers (soothers) | Caring for Kids

Baby bottles, pacifiers and teething necklaces

Choosing to use a pacifier, an artificial nipple or a bottle is a personal decision that depends on your family's needs. If you have any questions, talk to a health care professional.

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