

## Fact Sheet

# Dummies & Pacifiers

### **A lot of parents ask us “Is giving my child a dummy bad for their dental development?”**

Many of the kids we see can often do have issues with their teeth and jaws from sucking a dummy as an infant. The most common issue associated with dummy sucking is the development of an “anterior open bite”, where the front top and bottom teeth don’t touch when the back teeth bite together.

Just like digit and thumb sucking, the impact of sucking a pacifier depends upon the intensity of sucking, how long the dummy is used for and also how often. An older child who has a dummy in its mouth all day is much more likely to have issues than a 4 month old baby who uses a dummy just to go to sleep.

Although there is a barrage of dummies on the market, purporting to be “orthodontic” in nature, there are few dummies that don’t eventually interfere with growth of the the jaws and teeth and cause issues with speech and feeding.

### **Here are just a few important tips to remember if you are going to use a pacifier:**

1. Try to stop using them by 6 months - that’s when babies start eating solids so they need to develop their chewing muscles....
2. A dummy is called a pacifier - so don’t use the the one unless you’re trying to calm your baby
3. Try to limit it just to sleep time
4. Don’t let them walk around with it all the time! Injuries can happen with toddlers and dummies. Plus they are trying to learn facial expressions and speech - give them a chance to do that.

Remember, sucking is developmentally normal in babies, but as babies grow, they grow out of it and learn the skills to chew.....so you should never see a pacifier in a toddler.

