



Throughout the leaflet we've often referred to your healthcare professional for further advice. Although this is most likely to be your health visitor or GP, you can also talk to a midwife, maternity support worker, breastfeeding counsellor or a nursery nurse for advice. For ease, throughout this leaflet we have referred to baby as he - this applies to both boys and girls.

It is very important that babies are not given a soother for the first 4-6 weeks to allow the feeding pattern to become properly established. Some babies are easier to settle than others, so wait rather than forcing it upon him. If baby needs settling you should try alternative methods such as cuddling or feeding prior to using a soother.

How do I decide if I need to use a soother?

- Soothers can be preferable to thumb sucking. Although both can be bad for the development of the teeth, it's easier and quicker to wean a child off a soother.
- There is growing evidence that using a soother may play a part in protecting babies against cot death.
- Sucking on a soother can relieve emotional tension or physical pain, for example if he has colic.
- Soothers can help settle baby to sleep.

Soothers can have many benefits, provided that you use them in the right way and not for too long:

What are the benefits of using a soother?

Soothers, also known as dummies, pacifiers or comforters, come in lots of forms and are used to soothe and settle your baby. The most common form of soother is a silicone or latex teat with a mouth shield and small handle. These are safe as the shield prevents any risk of your baby swallowing and choking on the teat. As an alternative, a teether can help to soothe a fretful baby, especially when teething. Whatever you use, it is important that it is well looked after and replaced regularly.

What is a Soother?

Cleaning, sterilising and looking after your soother:

- For hygiene and safety reasons, you should change a soother every four weeks.
- Always inspect the soother before you give it to baby, and replace if it is worn or torn in any way.
- Always sterilize soothers prior to use for the first 12 months, as you would with all feeding equipment.
- It is a good idea to keep a couple of spare soothers handy in case of loss or accident.
- Latex dummies are softer and more flexible than silicone, but they don't last as long.

"The Tommee Tippee Closer to Nature soother has been developed by myself and biomedical engineer Josh Wiesman. The new innovative concept received enthusiastic support when presented to a panel of experts including dental professors, paediatric specialists, leading dentists, oral health educators, health visitors, midwives and speech and language therapists. Ground breaking in design, the Closer to Nature soothers could dramatically improve the oral health development of babies'."

Dr. Dave Tesini, Paediatric Dentist D.M.D, MS. June 2008

Useful contacts:

For further advice on soothers, speak to your healthcare professional or any of the following associations:

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| The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths | www.fsid.org.uk |
| National Childbirth Trust | www.nct.org.uk |
| NHS Direct | www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk |

For more information visit www.tommeetippee.co.uk



A parent's guide to soothing



Settling down



If you do decide to use a soother, then it's really important you choose the right one for the age of your baby and also look for one which protects baby's oral development.

What to look for in a soother:

- Where possible, look for a soother with a teat which flexes and stretches to give a more natural fit to the palate.
- There are now soothers available that gently expand across the roof of the mouth to support the palate, helping to maintain the natural shape. This will help the teeth to find their natural position.
- Where possible, look for a soother which has been endorsed by a paediatric dentist.
- Choose the right size of soother for the age of your baby, which takes into account his growing mouth.

Babies get their teeth at different times. Some are born with teeth; others may be still toothless at 12 months. But their mouths grow regardless, and using a soother that is too small for the mouth may result in oral health problems.

Tips for safe use of a soother:

- Don't use a soother as an instant plug – try to identify the source of the problem first. Remember if your baby is crying, it's often because he needs something from you, so check first whether he needs feeding or changing.
- A soother should only be used to help settle baby to sleep, not to soothe him during the day.
- Don't start using a soother until a feeding pattern is well established. This will usually take about 4-6 weeks.
- Encourage baby to give up the soother at about 1 year to ensure that it doesn't hinder oral development.
- If you speak to your baby or if your baby is starting to talk, ensure that he does not have a soother in his mouth.
- Never dip baby's soother into anything sweet – this can lead to tooth decay.
- Don't use ribbon or cord to fix the soother to baby's clothing – it could get wound round baby's neck and be a strangulation hazard. Only use a proper soother holder which meets all the safety standards.



Giving up a soother – aim to get rid of it at 12 months

- It will need to be done gradually and this may take some time, so persevere
- Watch how baby settles himself when he doesn't have the soother and build on this.
- Try limiting the use of a soother to key times such as just for settling at bedtime.
- Try to replace the soother with a cuddly toy, some music or a bedtime story.
- Ensure you have a good bedtime routine in place – for example bath, cuddle, story, then bed.
- When the soother is not being used, ensure it is kept out of sight.

Giving up a soother – for older babies

- Swap baby's soother for a new toy or something more grown up, for example a new cup or sports bottle.
- Reward him with fun activities, stickers or star charts.
- Continue to point out to baby that big girls and boys don't use soothers.
- Encourage your child to give his soother to a friend, or Father Christmas or the 'Soothe Fairy' to give to a new baby!

Don't give sweets in place of a soother, and don't nag baby – just give him lots of praise when he eventually does give it up!