

# Pacifiers

Babies are born with the need to suckle and a thumb or a pacifier can help soothe and calm your baby.

Many children prefer a pacifier over their thumb. If your baby wants to suck beyond what nursing or bottle-feeding provides, a pacifier can fill that need. A breastfeeding baby ideally should not be given a pacifier in the first 6 weeks – if your baby needs to suck, your breast is best.

Let your child decide if and when to use a pacifier - for example, some babies use one to fall asleep while others do not.

A pacifier should be used only after or between feedings and not to delay, or substitute for, a meal. If your child is hungry, and you offer a pacifier as a substitute, he/she may become so upset that it interferes with feeding.

Try not to let your child use a pacifier throughout the day and do not offer it every time your child cries – crying has many causes besides hunger and the need to suck.

If your child uses a pacifier, be sure to provide one that is safe. Look for pacifiers that:

- Are a one-piece model that has a soft nipple. Do not use the nipple from a baby bottle as a pacifier – your child could choke.
- Have a shield at least 1 1/2 inches across, made of firm plastic with air holes.
- Come in two sizes - one for the first 6 months and another for children after that age. There are many types of pacifiers - try different shapes until you find one your baby prefers.
- Are dishwasher-safe. Follow the pacifier instructions and either boil it or run it through the dishwasher before your baby uses it. Clean it this way frequently until your baby is 6 months old. After that, you can wash it with soap and rinse it in clear water.
- Are in good shape. Pacifiers do not last forever - inspect them often and replace if the rubber has changed color, torn or sticks when pinched together.



**Never tie a pacifier around your baby's neck or hand, or to your child's crib.**  
This increases the risk of injury or even death.

Jefferson County Public Health  
Community Health Services  
645 Parfet Street  
Lakewood, CO 80215  
303-232-6301



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