

Pacifiers and the breast fed baby



Does my breastfed baby need a pacifier?

Your baby may have a need to suck, even when they are not feeding. Sucking that is not associated with feeding is called non-nutritive sucking. Sucking at the breast, on a parent's finger, or on their own hands and fingers can meet your baby's need for non-nutritive sucking, without using a pacifier.

If your baby is fussy, or difficult to settle, try the following before using a pacifier:

- Place your baby skin-to-skin
- Decrease stimulation in your room (turn down the lights, turn off the TV)
- Make sure your baby's diaper is clean
- Make sure your baby isn't too cold, or too hot
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What are the disadvantages of using pacifiers?

Pacifier use may hide your baby's early feeding cues, like licking their lips, making mouth movements, or sucking on their hands, which may delay the start of a feeding.

The shape and texture of a pacifier is different than the breast and nipple, your baby may develop a preference for the firmness, making it difficult to latch to the breast correctly.

The increased pressure from sucking on a pacifier may cause more frequent ear infections.

If I choose to use a pacifier, what should I know?

Do not skip or delay a feeding by using a pacifier, this may lessen how often your baby breastfeeds, which may lower your breast milk supply.

Pacifiers can carry germs. Be sure to wash the pacifier frequently with hot, soapy water. Do not "clean" the pacifier by putting it in your mouth, as this may spread germs from you to your baby.

Do not clip or tie a pacifier to your baby, as this may cause strangulation injuries.

What about pacifiers and SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)?

Breastfeeding is associated with a reduced risk of SIDS, and the protective effects increases with breastfeeding exclusivity. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends using a pacifier at naptime and bedtime once breastfeeding is well established, usually at 3 to 4 weeks of life.

How do I know if breastfeeding is well established?

- Your milk supply has increased
- Baby breastfeeds at least 8 to 12 times in 24-hours
- Baby is satisfied after breastfeeding
- Baby is gaining weight
- Baby is heard swallowing during breastfeeding
- Baby has the expected number of dirty diapers



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