Teething tips

Teething can be distressing for some babies, but there are options available to make it more comfortable for them.
Every baby is different, and you may have to try a few different things until you find something that works for your baby.

Teething toys

Teething toys give your baby something to chew safely. This may ease their discomfort and distract them from any pain.
Some teething toys can be cooled first in the fridge, which may help to soothe your baby's gums.

Pain relief

If your baby is in pain, consult your pharmacist, health visitor or dental professional for appropriate pain relief that will be suitable for your child.

Improving Oral Health in Evermore Communities

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Nottingham City Oral Health Improvement Team

Community Dental Services

Dummies, Thumb Sucking and Teething Tips

Providing NHS Dentistry

NHS

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Oral health

Baby teeth (primary teeth) are important in guiding the adult (permanent) teeth into the correct position. Using a dummy may push teeth out of position causing problems for the adult teeth. Research shows that children who use dummies for prolonged periods of time are more likely to need orthodontic treatment when they are older. E.g. Fixed appliances (braces). Under no circumstances should a dummy be dipped in sugary substances as this can lead to tooth decay.

Dummies

Whether or not to offer a dummy is a parents' decision. Suckling is a baby's earliest reflex and can soothe and calm them when they are distressed. However, it can become a difficult habit to change for older babies and children.

Using a dummy

- To be used when a baby is distressed, to pacify them.
- If breastfeeding, avoid using a dummy until feeding is established.
- Aim to give up the dummy by 6 months - dummy use can delay speech development.
- Evidence suggests dummy use can increase the risk of middle ear infections.

Tips on giving up the dummy

Take it away early

It is recommended to discourage the use of a dummy from 6 months onwards.

Take it away gradually

Restricting usage to specific times or places is often the first step.

Replace with something else

Using another form of comfort will allow an easier transition to breaking the habit. E.g. A special teddy or a blanket.

Read books

Reading can be used with children to inspire and promote desirable behaviours.

Involving fantasy characters

The use of enchanting figures, such as ‘The Tooth Fairy’, ‘Santa’, or ‘The Easter Bunny’ can assist your child in giving up the dummy.

Thumb sucking

A child may also find comfort by sucking their thumb or fingers.

Thumb sucking can also affect teeth and speech, especially if it continues when the adult teeth come through around the age of 6.

Thumb sucking can cause a gap to develop between the front teeth, making eating difficult. It can cause the top teeth to protrude and the lower teeth to jut in, thus affecting speech.

Tips for giving up sucking thumb/fingers

- Rewards and positive reinforcements, (avoid food).

- A nail biting solution could be considered from the age of 3 (to be applied to the nail only), the bitter taste may put them off.

If a child over 6 years is unable to stop then a dental professional can advise on appropriate measures to prevent thumb sucking.