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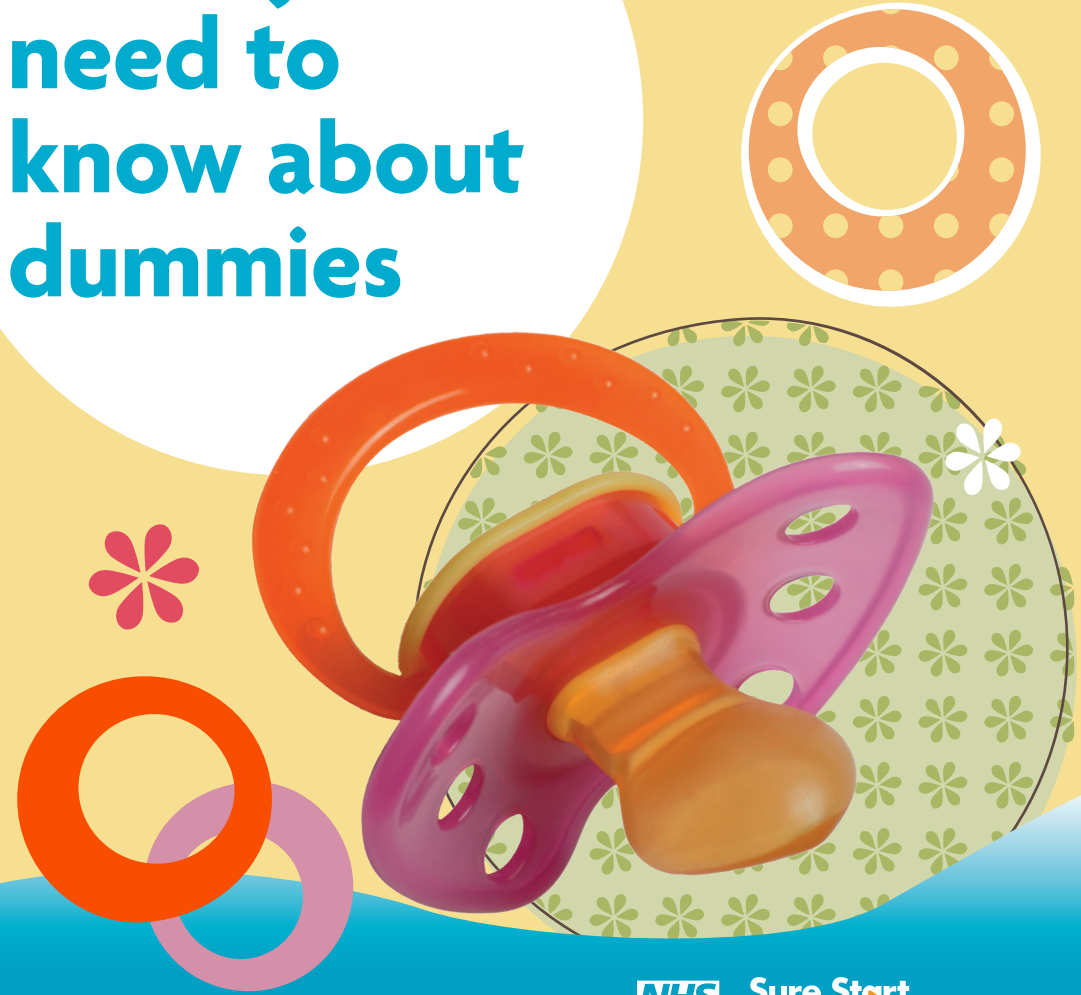
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Speech and language therapy at children's centres

# What you need to know about dummies



**NHS**  
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# What you need to know about dummies

## Not all babies need a dummy

### A dummy is useful for soothing a fretful baby, but it is important to try other methods

You may need to try different things and it may take a while to work but stick with it. If you keep experimenting you will get to know what your baby likes and what makes them calm and happy.

### Don't use the dummy as a plug to keep your baby's mouth closed and quiet

Your baby needs to practise making noises and it is their way of gaining your attention. They want to interact with you!

### If your child uses a dummy a lot it may cause certain problems:

- Poor positioning of the front teeth, usually leaving a gap. This can cause the child to 'lisp'
- Speech problems as the dummy restricts 'babbling' and tongue movements
- Your child may dribble more as they tend to have their mouth open.

### What can you do if your child has a dummy?

- Start restricting the amount of time your baby has their dummy after the age of 12 months. It is much easier to do this when they are little than when they are two or three years old!
- Try cuddling, rocking and reading stories to soothe them first
- Remove the dummy when your child is trying to talk
- Use a flat teat rather than a round one as this is likely to cause less damage to the teeth
- Never dip the dummy in anything sugary
- Praise your child if they give up their dummy
- Once you have decided your child should get rid of their dummy, don't be tempted to give it back.

### Remember:

**If your child is awake and happy, take the dummy out of their mouth**

**Using a dummy may delay your child's speech development**

**Try other ways to calm your baby eg. a cuddle, singing, rocking or stroking may work instead of the dummy.**

**If you have any questions or concerns about your child's speech and language development, please contact a Speech and Language Therapist via your local children's centre.**

