

Our institution is committed to supporting, protecting and promoting breastfeeding with the goal of earning Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) certification for its overall facilities. Pacifier use and thumb sucking are not among the practices favoured by BFI. However, we support all families in all their choices.

## SUCKING

Sucking is a reflex that enables the baby to feed and to soothe himself.

At around one, sucking becomes a habit, with the exception of breastfeeding.

Sucking habits include:

- using a pacifier;
- drinking from a breast or bottle;
- using the thumb or fingers;
- or even sucking the corner of a safety blanket.



## CONSEQUENCES OF THUMB-SUCKING OR PACIFIER SUCKING AFTER ONE YEAR

Don't wait too long to eliminate your child's sucking habits because they can:

- can delay the onset of language;
- can affect the shape of the palate, the position of the teeth, and the muscles in the mouth;
- can have a strong impact on swallowing and on word pronunciation;
- increase the risk of otitis.

## TIPS ON WEANING YOUR CHILD FROM THE PACIFIER

1. Even before your child's first birthday, gently remove the pacifier from their mouth when it's not needed.
2. Do not resort to the pacifier too quickly to soothe your child. Try to understand what makes your child uncomfortable and to answer his need before you consider giving him his pacifier.
3. Choose the right time to reduce pacifier and bottle use. Avoid attempting to wean your child around the same time as stressful events (e.g., moving, starting daycare, having a new baby).
4. If your child is old enough to understand, make this decision together by talking about the consequences for their teeth and mouth. A motivated child will be much more ready to cooperate!

5. Gradually limit where and when you use the pacifier. For example, put it somewhere out of sight during the day, in the car, at daycare, and so. The last use before removing it completely would be bedtime.
6. Name your child's feeling if they are frustrated or sad.
7. Use a positive approach such as a schedule of reinforcements. Avoid shaming, punishing or comparing your child with other children.
8. Use your imagination. You can invent a pacifier fairy who will exchange pacifiers for a surprise.

## TIPS ON WEANING YOUR CHILD FROM THUMB-SUCKING

1. Choose the right moment, proceed step by step, and involve your child in a positive manner. It might take longer to stop the thumb sucking. Your child will need encouragement.
2. You can agree with your child on a gesture or « secret code » to provide gentle, discreet reminders.
3. Explain to your child that he has control over his thumb, that he's the boss. You can draw a "Mr. Thumb who hates a mouth".
4. Identify the moments when your child sucks his thumb. You can help them change their habit in acceptable ways, such as cuddling his favorite stuffed toy.
5. Help your child to change his thoughts when the urge to suck his thumb is strong. Suggest activities that require him to use both hands such as drawing, using playdough, or construction games.
6. It is more difficult to manage thumb sucking at night. You can cover your child's thumb with a glove or a bandage. Your child might need you to be with him more on the first nights without his thumb. Relaxing bedtime activities are also helpful.



## TIPS ON BOTTLE WEANING YOUR CHILD

As early as age one, a child can learn how to use a glass. Replace the bottle (and even sippy cups) with a cup. Your child's mouth must be close their mouth in order to swallow in a mature manner.

For easier handling, you can choose a spill-proof water bottle with a soft, narrow straw.



Despite your best efforts, your child might still find it difficult to give up the pacifier; thumb sucking or any other sucking habit.

Speak to your speech therapist about it. She can also advise and assist you. You can also speak to your dentist or to a dental hygienist.