



Thumb, finger and dummy sucking



Sucking on a thumb, finger, or dummy is a common comfort behaviour that many children outgrow.

Sucking past the age of 4 can lead to:

- crooked teeth – teeth may be pushed out of alignment, affecting their bite
- speech challenges – a dummy can limit their ability to make all the sounds needed for clear speech
- tooth decay – dummies dipped in sugary stuff like honey can lead to cavities.

Tips to help break the habit

- **Take it slowly** – stopping dummy use suddenly is not recommended as it may trigger other sucking habits.
- **Limit dummy use** – gently remove the dummy at bedtime to help develop good sleep habits.
- **Celebrate success** – praise or reward your child for breaking the habit.
- **Use fun distractions** – keep their hands busy playing with a teething mitten, toy, activities and books.

Breaking this habit can be tough but your persistence will pay off.



For more information and support

- Talk to your community health nurse.
- See your oral health professional.



Visit the [Smiling Starts](#) website to view short videos and access other helpful information.

Contact 1800 939 666 if you have any queries.

Early Childhood Dental Program



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