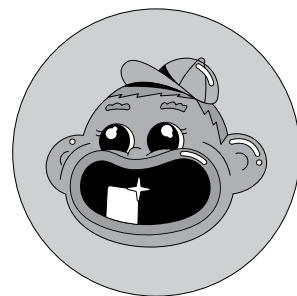




Thumb, finger and dummy sucking



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



Disclaimer: This publication is for general education and information purposes. Contact a qualified healthcare professional for any medical advice needed.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for people with disability.

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