

# Breastfeeding and dummy use for healthy term babies

Congratulations on the birth of your new baby and your decision to give your baby the best start in life by choosing to breastfeed

While you are getting to know your baby and his or her cues for readiness to breastfeed, and your milk supply is establishing, it is recommended that you avoid using a dummy or any kind of artificial teat during this time.

## Reasons to avoid the use of dummies and teats:

- The way in which a baby sucks on a dummy or teat is different to how a baby feeds at the breast and may interfere with the baby's ability to breastfeed and could cause baby to develop bad sucking habits or reject the breast.
- The dummy is used for non - nutritive sucking purposes which can lead to a breastfeed being delayed or even missed altogether. This reduced sucking at the breast will reduce the amount of stimulation that the breast receives which leads to a decrease in milk production. Allowing your baby to breastfeed each time he/she shows feeding cues enables you to establish a milk supply that meets the needs of your baby.
- Dummy use has also been linked to earlier weaning from the breast and breastfeeding exclusively for a shorter length of time. The World Health Organisation recommends exclusively breastfeeding for the first six months to give your baby the best start in life.
- Dummy and teat use has also been linked to dental problems. Using a dummy could cause changes in the way in which babies teeth grow and develop.

If you are having difficulties with attaching your baby to the breast or settling your baby without a dummy please ask your midwife for assistance. If there are problems with breastfeeding you may be referred to a Lactation Consultant for more specialised help and support with feeding.

If your baby is unsettled, you could try gently rocking, patting, or massaging him/her, offering another breastfeed, giving him/her a bath, using a baby sling or taking him/her for a walk in the pram.

For more information on techniques to help you settle your baby without the use of a dummy ask your midwife and/or refer to the websites mentioned on the back of your baby's Blue Book.



This document has been reviewed  
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## For more information

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