ORAL HEALTH KANSAS
ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION

TIPS AND TRICKS SERIES

Pacifiers: The Basics

Pacifiers help babies feel calm and secure. Knowing how to use them safely—and when to stop—helps protect your child's health and developing teeth.

Why pacifiers can help:

- Sucking is a natural way for babies to feel calm.
- Offering a pacifier at naps and bedtime can lower the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Pacifiers can comfort babies during shots or stressful moments.

Use pacifiers safely:

- If breastfeeding, wait until it is going well before offering a pacifier. Never replace a feeding with a pacifier.
- Choose an age-appropriate, one-piece pacifier. Replace it if damaged.
- Wash pacifiers with soap and water. Never clean one in your mouth—saliva can spread cavity-causing bacteria.
- Never dip pacifiers in honey or other sweet foods.
- Never tie a pacifier around a baby's neck or attach one to clothing during sleep.

When can pacifiers cause problems?

- Long-term use can affect how teeth and jaws develop.
- Frequent pacifier use, especially as babies get older, may increase the risk of ear infections.
- As your baby grows, begin using the pacifier less often. Aim to stop completely by age 3.
- Ask a dental professional if you notice changes in your child's bite.



Pacifiers Are for Comfort—not Forever!

As your baby grows, begin offering other ways to provide comfort. Small steps can make saying goodbye easier.

More Oral Habits Tips & Tricks:

- Goodbye, Pacifier!
- Thumbsucking: The Basics
- Goodbye, Thumbsucking!
- Teeth Grinding in Children