

Pacifiers and Breastfeeding

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends waiting until 3-4 weeks of age to introduce the pacifier, once breastfeeding is well established.
- They also recommend pacifiers at nap and bedtime for healthy term babies sleeping on their back, as some studies indicate it helps prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- It's unclear how often healthcare providers explicitly recommend pacifiers, but the reality is that many parents offer them much sooner than recommended.
- Therefore, realistic and individualized advice is in order.
- This pediatrician's opinion is that a pacifier can be considered when these 2 criteria are met:
 - 1)The latch is good:
 - baby is eager to latch
 - removes milk well
 - pain-free latch
 - 2)The baby can be trusted to spit out the pacifier and cry for milk if they are actually hungry, as some are so easily "pacified" that they don't ask for enough food to gain weight well.
- Do NOT introduce the pacifier in the first few days, because anytime baby desires to suckle is an opportunity to breastfeed. This brings milk in and transfers the valuable colostrum directly to baby.
- Pacifiers are sometimes used for pain reduction during procedures, for calming a drug-exposed infant, and to improve oral-motor function in a therapy program for select babies.
- Use a pacifier with a wide base, such as the *Soothie* or *Gumdrop*, to keep baby's mouth open wide on the pacifier, as it should be at the breast.

Weaning from the pacifier

- Long term pacifier use may increase the risk of ear infections, may affect mouth shape and teeth eruption, and may limit social interaction as the baby is less likely to talk and interact with a pacifier in their mouth.
- The longer they have one, the harder it will be to wean from it.
- The best time to take the pacifier away is between 6 to 9 months of age.
- The risk of SIDS dramatically drops after 9 months and many babies can sleep through the night without nursing.
- Babies come to depend on the pacifier to soothe themselves back to sleep during a normal night sleep-arousal cycle.
- If she can't replace it when it falls out of her mouth, she will cry for you to help her.
- These meetings in the night will exacerbate the typical separation anxiety at this age, giving her another reason to cry during the night as you leave her.
- This is a great time to take care of two issues at once.
- The baby can learn to fall asleep without the pacifier AND without the presence of a parent.
- You will likely sacrifice a couple nights of sleep to accomplish this, but if independent sleeping is your goal, everyone will sleep more in the long run.
- Remember to offer another transition object during this process and remain consistent and persistent.
- As always, some babies are more stubborn than others. Good luck!



Good



Bad

