



## Is a natural rubber soother the right choice for your child?

### Know the pros and cons of soothers.

Paci, binky, dummy, soother, pacifier ... the baby soother is known by many names, loved by many babies and agonised over by parents. However, recent research has many experts rethinking the use of soothers.

The soother, that time-honored baby accessory, is back in the news due to a recent review of studies showing a positive relationship between soother use and a significantly reduced risk of sudden infant death syndrome, commonly known as **SIDS**. The recent American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines state that soother use should actually be encouraged in children younger than one year of age.

Here are some more pros and cons of soother use:

According to review author Dr. Fern Hauck, MD, an associate professor of family medicine and public health sciences at the University of Virginia Health System in Charlottesville, Virginia, the benefits of soother outweigh the risks;

*"We're not telling people they have to use a soother, but we want them to have the information to know that it is potentially protective, [so] they can make an informed choice whether to offer one," she says.*

### The Pros

*"We're seeing a consistent protective effect from SIDS from use of a pacifier," says Dr. Hauck, stating that soother use offered a **61% percent reduction in risk of SIDS** clearly a lifesaving benefit, although experts aren't sure exactly how soother lower risk. "There are several theories that have been proposed. None have been proven, of course, and also we still don't know the exact cause of SIDS."*

*"A leading theory is that the soother actually helps improve the arousability of infants who are potentially faced with a life-threatening challenge," says Dr. Hauck. "There are other theories that say that it might have a more direct mechanical effect. For example, the soother may actually help keep the oral airway open by pushing the tongue forward."*

In addition, soother make a baby feel good, says Dr. Cathryn Tobin, MD, pediatrician and author of *The Lull-A-Baby Sleep Plan*. Sucking stimulates the release of chemicals from the brain that actually decrease stress. Of course, babies can self-soothe with their fingers or thumb as well, and both can become a habit - a habit that may damage teeth if allowed to continue when permanent teeth come in. But while it's not always easy to break a soother habit, it's a whole lot easier than breaking a thumb-sucking one, notes Dr. Hauck.

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## The Cons

So what are the downsides?

*"The biggest is that soother use could potentially interfere with breastfeeding", says Dr. Maria Tupas, medical director of Children's Hospital of Orange County Primary Care Clinics in California.*

*"It isn't clear from studies on nursing and soother use whether soothers actually cause breastfeeding problems or are simply a marker that such problems may be occurring. However, the interval between the introduction of the soother and weaning may be several months", says Dr. Tupas, "which suggests that soother use might reduce stimulation from suckling, resulting in a gradual reduction in breast milk production".*

*"This doesn't always have to be the case", says Dr. Hauck. "There's no question that frequent sucking on the breast is going to help maintain a good milk supply. So it is important that breastfeeding mums wait until baby is nursing well—it usually takes three or four weeks—before introducing the soother, and also that the breast always be offered first when the baby appears hungry."*

## Best Pacifier Practices

If you're breastfeeding, wait until nursing is well established (usually by around one month) before offering a soother, recommends Dr. Tupas. Because SIDS is less common in the first month of life, it's reasonable to delay soother introduction during this lower-risk period. If you are formula feeding, it's OK to offer a soother at birth. Never use a soother as a substitute for nursing or feeding, and never coat a soother in sugar, honey, or other sweet substances.

Offer the pacifier to your baby at naptimes and bedtime, suggests Dr. Tupas. In fact, many breastfeeding families choose to offer a soother only at those times. Once your baby is asleep, the soother should not be reintroduced if it falls out of the mouth.

Finally, keep in mind that it's best to start phasing out soother use by around one year of age.

And what if your baby wants nothing to do with the soother?

*"There's no reason to force her to take it", says Dr. Hauck. "If you try it, and Baby doesn't like it, wait a few weeks and try again. And if the baby still doesn't want it, then just don't worry about it. Just make sure you are following all the other SIDS risk reduction measures".*

For more information about the one piece makeUwell Natural Rubber Soother, please visit our website: <http://www.makeuwell.com.au/home.php?cat=29>

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