

# Patient Information Sheet:

## Dummies/Pacifiers: Information for parents

### Disadvantages / Concerns

- Some dummies may not meet Australian Safety Standards.
- Dummies grow germs therefore they increase the risk of infections e.g. mouth, gastrointestinal & ear.
- There is potential for choking.
- Lanyards or other devices attached to dummies can potentially cause strangulation.
- They need frequent replacement.
- There may be more difficulty for baby learning to breast feed if introduced in the first 2 weeks (whilst breastfeeding is establishing).
- Odd shaped dummies (so called orthodontic) are difficult for the baby to secure in their mouth and promote unusual use of their tongue and jaw, which can cause problems when trying to breastfeed – promotes poor sucking technique and contributes to difficulty breastfeeding.
- Prolonged use has a negative influence on dental development.
- Sometimes mistakenly given instead of a feed – therefore baby misses a feed and may not gain adequate weight. Overuse of a dummy may lead to very poor weight gain in the infant.
- Using a dummy reduces the amount of breast stimulus and therefore leads to a reduction in milk supply – which may lead to introduction of formula and unplanned early weaning.
- Using a dummy can lead to earlier return of fertility and menstruation due to decreased breast stimulation.
- There is a link between prolonged dummy use and recurrent middle ear infections.
- 

***Please speak to the midwife or your doctor if you would like more information***



# Patient Information Sheet (cont.)

## Disadvantages / Concerns continued

- Excessive dummy use can reduce or discourage early speech development.
- There is an increased risk of tooth decay, even more so if the dummy is dipped in any sugary substances such as honey.
- They can make you get up unnecessarily during the night to find your crying baby's lost dummy! – even though night feeds are no longer needed.
- Baby can become very dependent on the dummy.
- There is often difficulty weaning baby from the dummy at a later stage

## Advantages

- Can calm your baby and help them settle to sleep when nothing else works.
- Can calm your baby during uncomfortable procedures or painful situations.
- Can delay a feed for a short period of time (if needed).
- Can replace thumb sucking and can be thrown out!
- Inconclusive evidence it may help reduce the risk of SIDS. Note: until there is more conclusive evidence about dummies being protective for SIDS, SIDS & KIDS makes no recommendation about dummy usage at this stage.

### **References:**

2011 [www.sidsandkids.org](http://www.sidsandkids.org)

2011 [www.babycenter.com.au/baby/daily/dummies&pacifiers](http://www.babycenter.com.au/baby/daily/dummies&pacifiers)

2007 [www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au)

1995. Pacifiers: Yes or No? New Beginnings

[www.babycareadvice.com/babycare/general](http://www.babycareadvice.com/babycare/general)

**Please speak to the midwife or your doctor if you  
would like more information**