



# *Pacifier Weaning*

*Positive ways to wean a child off their  
pacifier*

# What The Experts Say

- Pacifiers are appropriate for soothing baby
- Pediatric dentists recommend limiting pacifier time once a child is 2 and eliminating it by age 4 to avoid dental problems
- Newborns rely on the “suck reflex” not only for sustenance but also for soothing (this is child’s way to destress)
- If baby nurses more than every two hours, he’s using mom as pacifier

# Pacifier Pros and Cons

## Pros

Pacifiers may decrease the chance of cavities by keeping baby from using the bottle or breast for non-nutritive sucking. Babies who sleep with the bottle can develop baby-bottle cavities in all 16 or 20 of their teeth.

## Cons

Recent studies have linked pacifiers with a three times higher risk for ear infections, so if these are a recurring problem for your child, it may be worth eliminating the pacifier to see if it makes a difference

## When to Stop

Developmental psychologist recommend discontinuing the pacifier by a year. At that age, a child's developmental needs do not include sucking. Sucking is no longer a source of soothing.





*How to Stop  
The Three-Day Plan*

## DAY- 1

- *Day 1: In the morning and at naptime, tell your child that you can see she wants to do lots of things that make her older. Tell her that's a good idea, and that in three days it will be time for her to say goodbye to her pacifiers. Tell her you know she can do it and that you'll work together on it. Keep the talk to 30 seconds and don't sound as if you're asking permission. If your child responds, reflect back her feelings—"I know you don't want to"—then move on. Don't worry that your child will become anxious if given advance warning. That's a myth. Like adults, children like to prepare themselves physically, psychologically, and emotionally for change."*

## DAY- 2

- *Day 2: Repeat the same 30-second talk twice daily, only replace "in three days" with "tomorrow." Don't try to sell her on the idea. Keep your tone and manner matter-of-fact.*

## DAY- 3

- *Day 3: Remind your child that it's day three and time to gather up his pacifiers. Act as if you're going on a scavenger hunt and ask your child if he'd like to help. Even if he refuses and protests, proceed to collect his pacifiers, place them in a plastic bag, and put them on the front step for "pick-up by the recycling truck." Explain that the pacifiers will be made into new tires or toys. Children recognize that recycling is purposeful and intelligent, and will be far less upset than if you throw their treasured pacifiers in the trash. Which is not to say your toddler won't have a meltdown. Be empathetic, but firm, most children get over losing their pacifiers within 48 hours.*



*How to Stop  
The Gradual Approach*

## *Gradual is ok even when they older...*

- Start by removing the pacifier in "zero-distress" situations, like when your child is happy, and playing. Once she's used to not having her pacifier in these situations, eliminate it from more areas gradually.*



## More tips...

### Offer Alternative Comforts

When you first take away the pacifier from your baby, you'll probably need to soothe her in other ways. Rocking, a gentle swinging motion, soft singing, and gentle massage are some ways you can help ease your baby's discomfort and help her settle down without the aid of a pacifier, says the Mayo Clinic. For older babies, blankets with a soft satiny edge or a snuggly stuffed animal could provide the comfort your little one desires.

### Get Everyone Onboard

Make sure all caregivers are aware of your plans for the pacifier. You want the message and experience regarding pacifier use to be consistent at home, at daycare, and at grandma's, or you'll risk confusing your child. So if you want the pacifier used only at nap-time or bedtime, for example, be sure to communicate to all adults involved.

More tips...

## Give Them Away

Some moms have success using reason with their toddlers. You could explain to your child that she is now a big girl and that there is a baby out there who needs her pacifiers to stop crying. Engage your little one in decorating a box for the baby, then gather up all of the pacifiers and place them in it. If you have a friend with a baby, make a big deal about handing over this box for the baby, or take it to a pediatric dentist who will distribute the binkies to babies (wink, wink). Be sure to offer a lot of praise and a small gift to your toddler for being such a kind and generous "big kid."

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