

Aeroflow Breastpumps

Pacifiers

Babies are born with a suck reflex needed for survival. The rooting reflex, along with this suck reflex, work together for a newborn to find the breast and breastfeed. Sucking is more than a way to get nutrition. It can also be soothing and calming for your baby. In this way, breastfeeding is a natural way to feed and calm your baby. However, some parents turn to pacifiers as an additional way to soothe their baby.

When Can I Introduce a Pacifier to My Baby?

Wait until breastfeeding has been well established. Your baby should be gaining weight appropriately and latch well to your breast. This is usually around 3 to 4 weeks after birth. A pacifier should not be given to replace, limit, or delay a feeding.

What Type & Shape Are Best?

Pacifiers were created to soothe and comfort a baby by mimicking a mother's nipple. Most pacifiers are made of a BPA-free silicone material. The soft texture resembles a human nipple. There is a wide range of pacifier sizes and shapes. Choose a pacifier with a wide base- the part of the pacifier that touches your baby's lips. This will encourage a deep latch similar to the latch at the breast.

Pacifier Benefits

- Can be used for suck training in premature infants. Linked to shorter hospital stays and better breastfeeding outcomes.
- Helps reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) when used during sleep. Breastfeeding also helps reduce the risk.
- Helpful during travel. Provide a distraction for car rides and airplane travel relieving painful ear pressure.
- Sucking on a pacifier can provide pain relief when receiving vaccines, routine exams, or other medical procedures.
- Allows other caregivers to provide comfort if you are not nearby to nurse. It should not replace a feeding but briefly soothe a fussy baby.

Pacifier Risks

- Early pacifier use (before 3 to 4 weeks) can make latching to the breast more difficult or shallow. This can lead to a shorter duration of breastfeeding, sore nipples, and engorgement.
- Time spent sucking on a pacifier leads to less time sucking at the breast. This may lower your milk supply and affect baby's weight gain.
- Prolonged use can increase the risk of ear infections and thrush.
- Associated with poor dental development if used after 2 years old.
- Overuse and extended use may delay speech development. Your baby is less likely to engage and communicate while using a pacifier.

More to Consider

- Clean pacifiers often. Sterilize at least once a day if your baby is less than 3 months old.
- Never dip a pacifier in sugar, honey, or any other sweet substance.
- Replace a pacifier that is torn, cracked, or broken.
- Offer the breast first. Breastfeeding is a natural way to calm your baby.
- Wean from the pacifier when the baby is a year old. This helps prevent long-term problems with speech and teeth.
- Try limiting use to bedtime and naptime.
- Never use a pacifier on a necklace or with a clip or strap. This can be a strangulation hazard.
- Never force the pacifier into a baby's mouth.
- If your baby is happy and relaxed, there is no need to introduce a pacifier.

What If I Have Questions?

If you are interested in learning more about pacifier use, these other Aeroflow classes expand on some of the topics discussed above:

- Ultimate Breastfeeding Prep
- Babycare for the Breastfed Baby

To register for these classes, log into your portal or click [here](#).

Want More Info?

For a directory of Aeroflow's other Care Guides offering information on pregnancy, baby care, and more, browse our comprehensive list of titles:

<https://www.hersourcehealth.com/aeroflow-care-guides/>

References

1. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/crying-colic/Pages/Pacifiers-and-Thumb-Sucking.aspx>

(Additional sources from the original article)

Holmes, A. V., McLeod, A. Y., & Bunik, M. (2013). *ABM Clinical Protocol #5: Peripartum Breastfeeding Management for the Healthy Mother and Infant at Term, Revision 2013*. *Breastfeeding Medicine*, 8(6), 469–473. <https://doi.org/10.1089/bfm.2013.9979>

Muneer, M. (2013). *Re: pacifiers: review of risks vs benefits*. *Dental Update*, 40(7), 590. <https://doi.org/10.12968/denu.2013.40.7.590>

Moon, R. Y., Tanabe, K. O., Yang, D. C., Young, H. A., & Hauck, F. R. (2011). *Pacifier Use and Sids: Evidence for a Consistently Reduced Risk*. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 16(3), 609–614. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-011-0793-x>