

Should You Give Your Breastfed Newborn a Pacifier?

General Information

One decision you will need to make is if you should give your newborn a pacifier. This is a personal choice. To help you decide what's right for you and your baby, please consider the following information.

Recommendation

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends waiting until a breastfed baby is 3 to 4 weeks old before giving a pacifier. By then, breastfeeding is usually going well.

Using a pacifier when a baby is older should not cause a problem with latching and nursing properly at the breast.

Concerns About Pacifier Use

The more time your newborn spends nursing in the first weeks of life, the more milk you will make. Regular pacifier use in the early weeks will decrease time at the breast. This can lead to decreased milk supply and slow weight gain.

Sucking on a pacifier is different than feeding at the breast. Your newborn may try to nurse at the breast the same way she sucks on the pacifier. This can lead to sore nipples.

Research has found that using pacifiers in the newborn period increases the chance of early weaning from the breast.



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The more a baby uses a pacifier, the less time the baby is at the breast telling the mother's body to make a full milk supply.

Cluster Feeding

A common time to wonder if your baby needs a pacifier is when your newborn seems fussy and is asking to feed frequently. This is normal behavior for your newborn and is described as cluster feeding. It often happens in the evening and night time. But it can happen at any time of the day.

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Feeding your baby at the breast during these “cluster nursing” periods helps your milk come in faster. It also helps to create a milk supply that meets all your baby’s needs for growing well in the days and weeks to come.

After a good feeding you may feel your baby only needs some comfort sucking to fall asleep. You can offer your finger to help settle your baby.

It is also fine to keep your baby at your breast for some comfort sucking. When your baby is latched well, it will not cause sore nipples.

If you choose to use a pacifier in the early weeks, use it for the least amount of time possible.

Whom To Call With Questions

If you have questions or concerns about your baby’s health (including feeding and weight gain), talk with your baby’s health care provider.

If you have questions or concerns about breastfeeding, talk with your lactation consultant.