

Finger-Sucking Habits and Pacifiers, too!



Does your child suck on his/her fingers or pacifier?

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, this is completely normal for babies and small children. It provides them with security and helps them contact with and learn about the world. Most children stop this habit on their own between 2 and 4 years of age. When children continue these habits over a prolonged period of time, it can affect the way their teeth bite together, as well as the growth of their jaw. For those children who are not so willing to break the habit on their own, there is help.

- Birth to 3 years of age:** Set limitations if your child understands. Allow them to comfort themselves at naptime and at bedtime, but not throughout the day.
- 3 to 5 years of age:** Set limitations and discourage them from putting "dirty fingers" in their mouths. Explain how germs can cause them to become sick. Children may also be willing to "pass their paci's" onto a younger baby in the family or in the neighborhood.
- 6 to 9 years of age:** Practice all of the above and add "Mavala Stop" (see below), an over-the-counter paint-on product. Many of our patients have had great success with this method.
- 10 to 12 years of age:** Practice all of the above and add a custom "Habit Reminder Appliance" (see below) made by Dr. Solow. Read more about this appliance at www.dr溶ow.com.



The bottom line is...as a parent, you know your child best. Use your own judgement as to whether you think he or she is ready to let go!

