



Established 1965

Theydon Bois Pre-School Group

Will milk at bedtime damage my child's teeth?

The answer is no, however your child's teeth are most at risk during the night. This is because there is less saliva in the mouth to protect them.

Water is the best drink to give at bedtime, if you do give milk at bedtime ensure it isn't flavoured with any powders or syrups as these usually contain sugars, which will increase the risk of tooth decay.



When should my child give up bottles?

At the age of six months your child should start the transition from bottle on to a free-flow cup.

It is best to try and get your child off bottles completely by the age of twelve months, because the teats and spouts encourage children to suck for long periods of time, meaning the drinks that can cause tooth decay stay in contact with your child's teeth for a longer period of time.

Sippy Cup vrs Free Flow Cup

Sippy cups are similar to a bottle in that they require the child to suck to make them work.

Free-flow cups are better, as they don't have valves so the flow of liquid is unrestricted. As a result children learn to drink normally rather than by sucking





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Will a dummy or thumb sucking harm my child's teeth?

No, but they will encourage the development of an open bite, which is when teeth move to make space for the dummy or thumb.



Dummies and thumb sucking may also have a significant effect on speech development. So, it is best to avoid using dummies after your child reaches 12 months old. Thumb sucking can be a harder habit to break; problems are less likely if the child is encouraged to stop before their second teeth start to develop.

It can be difficult in discouraging the use of dummies and thumb sucking and for some it can take some time. In the meantime, try to discourage your children from talking or making sounds with their thumb or a dummy in their mouth, when they are talking remove these from their mouth and encourage them to talk.

Tips

Whilst weaning children off these habits it's important to not feel alone, many parents and families are facing the same challenge. Remember that each child is unique and will learn and adapt at their own pace with gentle support and encouragement.

A visit to the dentist can sometimes encourage this or a story from the tooth fairy. There are also many ways in which your setting can support you so please don't hesitate to ask.

For more information about how to best support your child with good oral health check out the Children's Teeth information page by heading to www.dentalhealth.org