

## Why You Should Give Up the Pacifier...and Other Oral Habits

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### 1) What is a noxious oral habit?

Any oral habit that does not promote a natural resting posture, including (but not limited to):

- Thumb Sucking
- Pacifier
- Finger Sucking or Chewing
- Sippy Cup Use
- Nail biting
- Tongue sucking
- Shirt Chewing or Sucking

### 2) What age should a noxious oral habit be eliminated?

The sooner the elimination of a noxious oral habit, the better. However, from a craniofacial growth standpoint, elimination by age 6 is important.

### 3) Why does it matter?

A noxious oral habit creates imbalance within the oral cavity. The primary habit (e.g. thumb, finger, etc.) does not allow for natural growth patterns to occur (for dentition or overall craniofacial). For example teeth may not come together in the front due to a thumb sucking habit.



The habit alone is not helpful, but the secondary impact may have lasting effect. If a child sucks their thumb, the tongue is in a constant low and forward pattern, which does not allow for a healthy resting posture (along roof of mouth). The low and forward resting tongue posture may not let the dentition close even if the primary habit is eliminated.

**SPEECH!** The negative tongue patterns that develop from a noxious oral habit may impact your child's ability make progress in speech therapy. Habit elimination is a vital component of speech therapy progress.