

TIPS AND TRICKS

THUMBSUCKING



Children suck their thumbs for a variety of reasons. For infants, it is a natural reflex that often begins in the womb



Children suck on their fingers, clothing, and toys, by doing this action they learn what is comforting and what is uncomfortable



Children also use sucking to soothe and comfort themselves. Since the action is relaxing, it often induces sleep, which is why parents notice children sucking their thumbs when they are tired



According to the American Dental Association (ADA), after a child's permanent teeth come in, thumb sucking can cause problems with proper mouth growth, teeth alignment, and it can cause changes to the roof of the mouth



Children who just rests their thumb in the mouth or passively sucks on it are less likely to develop problems than a child who sucks their thumb intensely



Parents whose children are vigorous thumb suckers should pay attention to any changes in their child's primary teeth and consult a dentist if any changes are spotted



The ADA recommends children give up thumb sucking by the time their permanent front teeth start coming in, which is typically around the age of five.



When you notice your child's thumb in his mouth, try to distract them with an activity that requires they use both hands



To distract your child before naptime and bedtime, have them hold the book you are reading or hug a stuffed animal with both arms



The most common problem caused by thumb-sucking is a poor bite in the form of:

- **Buck teeth**, where the upper front teeth are more prominent
- **Open bite**, where the teeth do not meet together at the front
- **Cross bite**, where the lower side teeth bite outside the upper teeth
- **Tipping back** or crowding of the lower front teeth

