



FINGER/THUMB SUCKING HABITS

The following information can be used to manage and eventually end habitual thumb and finger sucking.

The main consideration in stopping any habit is the person's desire to make a change. If a patient really does want to stop a sucking habit, the instructions outlined will help to accomplish that goal.

The approach to stop the habit centers around a day by day change in behaviors which eventually become the new pattern of behavior. Consequently, we advise you to give special effort and attention to these instructions each day and be positive in reinforcement. Gradually the habit will be eliminated.

1. Post a calendar in a conspicuous place in your child's room or in the house. This will be used for daily record of your child's progress. Each day should have an entry. A sticker or star for good days and a OOPS for a day that your child should forget.
2. Before going to bed at night, place adhesive tape, a sock or a glove on the hand/finger/thumb that your child sucks. This is a helpful reminder during the night not to suck, especially when your child is asleep.
3. When riding in the car or watching T.V., be sure to have some activity that occupies the hands. Some suggestions are coloring books, hand games or other crafts.
4. Keep some sugarless chewing gum handy so that your child might chew instead of sucking if the urge strikes.

We recommend that you start with small projects like stopping the habit during the day first. Once that is accomplished, you can progress to stopping the habit at night. Positive reinforcement and patience is important to helping your child in stopping the sucking habit. Once your child has stopped, please let us make a big deal of it by letting them pick out a special prize at our office!