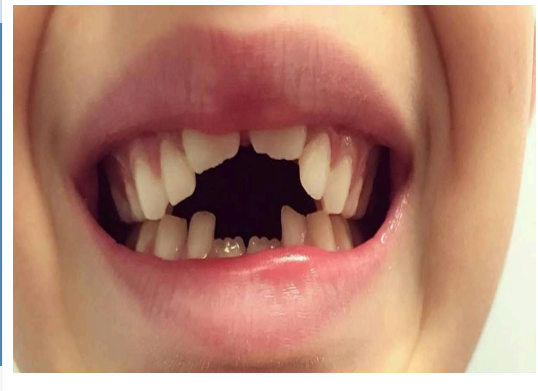


What is thumb sucking?

Thumb or finger sucking is a common sight among babies and small children. Infants are born with a natural urge to suck their thumbs, which usually decreases after they reach the age of 6 months. Some children, however, continue to suck their thumbs or fingers to soothe themselves. Thumb sucking can quickly become a habit in children who do so when they feel impatient, scared, hungry, tired, or bored.



★ ★ ★ ★
BEFORE
THUMBS UP!

What's wrong with thumb sucking?

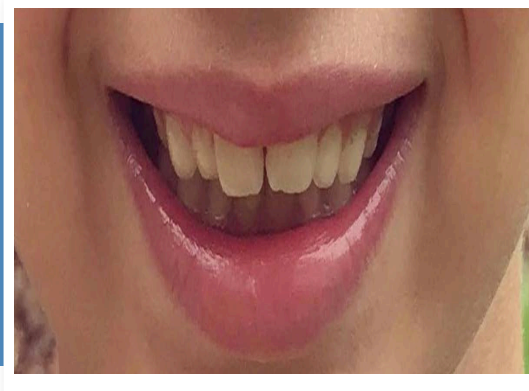
Although not considered a serious problem by many as far as habits are concerned, if thumb or finger sucking persists longer than it should, some not-so-pleasant problems develop. Thumb sucking can speed up the growth of the upper jaw, slow down the growth of the lower jaw, and cause improper alignment of the teeth.

Other long-term complications may also develop. Constant pressure by the thumb or fingers can cause a high narrow palate, early loss of baby teeth, abnormal swallowing patterns, improper tongue position, and speech problems.

Children who can break the habit typically enjoy an improved appearance, an ability to speak more clearly, and better dental health.

When is the best time to break the habit?

The best time to break the habit is before the permanent teeth grow in, at around the age of 4 to 6. If your child is older and continues to suck their thumb or fingers, don't worry! Therapy performed by a qualified speech pathologist with training in orofacial myology can usually begin to reverse the negative effects of thumb or finger sucking in just a few weeks – so you can give your child a Thumbs Up!



★ ★ ★ ★
AFTER
THUMBS UP!

What is the best way to help my child stop thumb sucking?

Some methods are better than others. The therapy known as behavioral modification has proven at least 90% effective. Instead of using negative reinforcement (such as with an appliance) to break the habit, positive reinforcement establishes self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment in your child.

The Thumbs Up! Thumb Sucking Elimination Program uses the power of positive reinforcement as a motivator, allowing your child to take charge of breaking his or her own habit with guidance and support from both the therapist and parents. The program creates a sense of self-satisfaction that quickly and effectively replaces the child's thumb or finger sucking desire.