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Some advice to stop sucking your thumb

This leaflet has been written for patients who suck their thumb or finger.

- If you have not stopped sucking your thumb (or finger) by the age of 6-7 years it can affect the position of your teeth.
- Sucking your thumb also affects brace work – your thumb is pushing the teeth in one direction and the brace is pulling them in another (this can damage your teeth).
- Because of this it is best to stop sucking your thumb as soon as possible.
- With a bit of will power most people are able to stop sucking their thumb during the day.
- The hardest part of the habit to break is when you are tired or when you are going to sleep – you are often not aware that you are doing it at these times.
- This is when a ‘reminder’ on your thumb can help you to keep it out of your mouth. An old-fashioned fabric sticking plaster is a good reminder – they are rough, taste bad and get very soggy when wet – not something you want to put in your mouth.
- You can also try using some nail varnish designed to stop you biting your nails – the bad taste of this should put you off.
- More drastic measures can include sewing your pyjama sleeve up, or wearing a glove or a sock to stop you putting your thumb in your mouth.
- For most people this will work within a few weeks. It does take a lot of will power but the end results are worth it.

Further Information

Orthodontic Department telephone number: 01305 255174