

A guide for parents about dribbling

Reasons why your child might dribble:

- Your child may be unaware that they dribble.
- Problems with their ears, tonsils and adenoids that could cause them to dribble.
- Feeding difficulties and find it hard to tolerate lumpy foods.
- Oral co-ordination problems. This is a difficulty co-ordinating their lips, tongue and palate to form speech sounds and strings of sounds.
- Learning new skills, such as walking or running, or when they are teething.

How you can help

The following suggestions may help you and your child to manage their dribbling:

- If your child has a dummy try to phase it out (keep for sleep and rest times only).
- Try using open cups rather than bottles or trainer cups.
- Encourage the use of a straw where possible as blowing and sucking help control dribbling.
- Encourage your child to sit up straight to eat and drink.
- Try to build up your child's awareness of "wet" and "dry". Play games where they experience their face and other body parts being "wet" and "dry". Talk with your child about how it feels to be "wet" and "dry".
- Don't wipe your child's mouth. Pat or dab across the chin three times to encourage them to seal their lips.
- Let your child know you are going to dab, don't take them by surprise.
- Give your child frequent reminders to pat their own mouth dry. Praise them when they do this.
- Do not clean up saliva unless it is necessary as this stimulates more saliva.
- Encourage your child to swallow their saliva, this will teach them to be more aware of saliva in their mouth.
- Encourage your child to try different tastes, textures and temperatures of food at meal times. This will increase development of mature chewing skills which will help control dribbling.

Contact us

Visit www.kentcht.nhs.uk/cits or contact our speech and language therapists at the Children's Integrated Therapy Service if you have any queries or concerns regarding the information in this leaflet.

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Please say if you would like the team to call you back

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You will be asked for your agreement to treatment and, if necessary, your permission to share your personal information.

Leaflet code: 0xxxxxb

Published: July 2016

Expires: July 2019

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