



Media Release
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BABY DUMMIES - URGENT ACTION NEEDED

The Australian Breastfeeding Association joins the call for a mandatory safety standard for dummies.

Australian babies are being put at risk as many dummies fail health and safety tests but also because of incorrect use of dummies.

In the wake of findings by *Choice* magazine, the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) today called for urgent action to ensure babies' safety and to correct the widespread misinformation about early use of dummies.

Excessive or inappropriate use of a dummy, especially in the early weeks, can compromise breastfeeding, for two reasons. Firstly, mothers may use dummies to stretch out the period between breastfeeds, thus reducing their supply of breastmilk. Secondly, dummies alter an infant's sucking technique. Dummies may cause sucking confusion for a small baby and this can result in early weaning.

ABA President Margaret Grove said the findings were very disturbing. She urged that the voluntary standard be amended to a mandatory safety standard with health warnings on dummies. Warnings should include their effect of compromising breastfeeding and therefore increasing risks to the health of infants and in later life.

'The role of breastfeeding in helping prevent obesity and various chronic illnesses in later life, and in lowering the risks of common childhood infections is well established,' she said. 'But there needs to be attention paid to the risks dummies pose to babies' health, as well as to their safety.' Ms Grove commented.

ABA website www.breastfeeding.asn.au.

Further information: ABA President Margaret Grove (02) 9713 2482, (mobile 0414 773 714)

Lee King 0408 535 687

NSW Carey Wood 02 4363 2073,

ACT Julie Smith 02 6241 8861,

QLD Merewyn Janson 07 3814 0535,

SA/NT Corrina Paget - 08 8298 9944 or 0419 110 326

TAS Susanne Groom 03 64372462,

WA Kirsten Tannenbaum 08 93641321,

VIC Karen Commisso 0438 259 456