








**COMMUNITY PAEDIATRIC OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND
PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES**

Chewing or Biting Non Food Objects

There can be different reasons why children may seek chew or bite non food items. If children are growing new teeth such as when they are changing from milk teeth to adult, they can seek to bite on things that offer strong resistance, such as wood and plastic. However many children chew to gain the strong deep pressure that biting and chewing on non food objects can give. This can be irritating for parents but is within the norm i.e. chewing jumper cuffs, 'Hoodie' strings. Deep pressure is known to be calming and some children may seek to get this effect through the mouth. For some children chewing can be excessive and they can chew items to the point of destruction. Other children may be seeking a strong or specific taste. It is important when considering how to help your child that you consider what they gain from it as this may help you choose the right kind of strategy to use.

DIFFICULTY	IDEAS TO TRY
<p>Seeking to bite or chew non food objects. Due to teething issues.</p>	<p>Seek advice from a dentist. Offer more suitable alternatives to chew on such as something firm like the corner of a towel or flannel, a Chew Stick ,Chew'llry , Trichew, Chew pendants Available from www.specialdirect.com, www.rompa.com and other internet sources.</p>
<p>Biting and chewing to get deep pressure in the mouth.</p>   	<p>Ask the child to do some activities to give deep pressure and proprioception to the mouth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Stretch the mouth wide open as if having a big yawn •Stretch the mouth into a big smile to say 'Weeeeeeee' •Press the lips together firmly •Clench the teeth together • Blow out cheeks. <p>Offer more suitable alternatives to chew on such as something firm like the corner of a towel or flannel, a Chew Stick ,Chew'llry , Trichew, Chew pendants Available from www.specialdirect.com, www.rompa.com and other internet sources.</p> <p>Blow up balloons (not for very young children) Flying saucer balloons are the easiest ones to start with, pinch the balloon neck between breathes to stop the air pushing back into the lungs.</p>

<p>These ideas may help if they are seeking deep pressure or strong / specific flavours.</p> 	<p>Use sports bottles to provide drinks as the sucking is an alternative way of giving deep pressure and the drink inside can be tailored to your child's needs.</p> <p>If they seek strong flavours try them with Lime cordial, fiery ginger beer, bitter lemon drink, or grapefruit/orange juice.</p>
<p>Chewing gum or bubble gum needs to have rules around it's use such as: disposing of it properly, not running about with it in the mouth, and permission from school if it is to be used in the classroom.</p> 	<p>Try using more than one piece to give more resistance and look for flavours such as Cola, Cinnamon and Sour Apple if you child needs strong flavours.</p>
	<p>Offer edible alternatives to non food items such as beef jerky which is quite leathery and salty, Marmite or Gentleman's Relish on crunchy toast.</p>
	<p>Heavy Muscle Work Activities</p> <p>Also encourage your child to take part in activities, which involve heavy muscle work, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pulling or pushing a loaded trolley, • bouncing, • carrying shopping, • pushing against a wall, • digging the garden, • active walking



- climbing on a climbing frame or wall
- Carrying a rucksack with heavy items in such as bottles of water.

NB. Children should not carry weights more than 10% of their body weight, so ensure the rucksack is not heavier than this.

NAME:

DATE:

Ideas to try	Outcome
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	