Weaning tips

Bedtime

Offer your child a cup with water and a snack before bed instead of a bottle. Brush teeth after the snack. If you have to put him to bed with a bottle, put plain water in it.

Try other ways to comfort your child instead of a bottle:

- give her a favorite blanket or toy to sleep with (if over 12 months old)
- offer a clean pacifier
- read a story
- sing or play music
- rub his back
- hold or rock him

Breastfeeding

If you're breastfeeding your child, that's great! Just remember, breastfed babies can get cavities, too. Be sure to clean your child's teeth and gums every morning and at bedtime.

When you go out

Take a healthy snack and a cup for your child instead of a bottle. Take a few toys or books along to keep her happy.

Training Cup Warning

- If it's not a meal or snack time, put only plain water in the training cup.
- Other liquids like juice, milk, and sweet drinks can cause tooth decay.

Keep your child's teeth healthy

- Ask your doctor about giving your child fluoride drops. Fluoride will help protect the teeth.
- Brush your child's teeth with a small, soft toothbrush with a tiny bit of fluoride toothpaste, twice a day.
- Take your child to a dentist by age one — sooner if you think there might be a problem.

It's up to you!

You can help your child grow well, be healthy, and have strong teeth. Help your child change from the bottle to the cup!

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CALIFORNIA WIC
WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN
Families grow healthy with WIC

Time for a Cup!

Help your child change from the bottle to the cup!

Why change to a cup now?

Weaning your child

Your baby is growing up! Weaning begins when your child starts eating solid foods and learns to drink from a cup.

Why a cup?

Now your child needs to eat a lot of different foods to grow. If he fills up on drinks from a bottle, he will not eat enough of the other good foods. He could have other problems from using a bottle too long: tooth decay, anemia, too much weight gain, or ear infections.

Tooth decay

Children can get tooth decay when they drink from a bottle, or even a training cup, many times during the day or night.

Why?

Milk, baby formula, juice, and sweet drinks all have sugar. This sugar can rot your child's teeth if she goes to sleep with a bottle or drinks from a bottle or a training cup all day long. This tooth decay can be very painful.

Baby teeth are important! They help your child eat well and talk, and they help the second teeth come in straight.

Anemia

Children who use a bottle can get anemia or low-iron blood.

Why?

Children fill up on drinks from a bottle. Milk, juice, and other drinks are low in iron.

Children need foods like meat, chicken, beans, and WIC cereals to get the iron they need to grow. Anemia can make your child feel tired and weak, eat poorly, not grow well, get sick easily, and have trouble learning.

Overweight

Children who use a bottle after their first birthday sometimes gain too much weight.

Why?

When they drink from a bottle, children may drink more than they need.

After your child's first birthday, 3 to 4 small servings of milk or milk products a day is enough. No more than 16 ounces of milk per day. Limit juice to about ½ cup per day (4 ounces). Using a cup will make it easier to drink less.

Ear infections

Children who drink from a bottle while lying down can get ear infections.

Why?

The liquid from the bottle can go into your child's ear. This is how some ear infections begin.

How to wean your child from the bottle

You can help your child change to the cup by trying these steps:

- Start teaching your child to use a cup at around 6 months. Try a small plastic cup. A cup with a lid is not as messy. It should have a hard spout. Some children like cups with handles.

- Help your child learn to take sips of water, breastmilk or formula from the cup. Give her lots of practice. Learning takes time! Try not to worry about spills.
- At around 9 or 10 months, start cutting down on the number of bottles your child gets each day. Use the cup instead.
- If morning and bedtime bottles are hard to give up, start weaning with the daytime bottles. By 12 months, if you use a bedtime bottle, put plain water in it.
- Give your child healthy snacks between meals instead of a bottle. Give a little water, breastmilk or milk in a cup with snacks.