

# NUTRITION

On Your  
Own

Self-Paced Lesson

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## Weaning from the Bottle for Healthy Teeth and a Healthy Diet

Getting your baby off the bottle by 14 months is an important step for both of you. It is a big part of growing up. It is also important in preventing health problems. By weaning around a year you can:

- avoid having your toddler gain extra weight,
- prevent your toddler from having anemia or low iron, and
- help to protect your toddler's teeth from decay.

Toddlers who still use a bottle tend to drink more than they need. That can cause them to gain too much weight. The extra milk, juice, and other drinks can also interfere with their eating all the important foods they need for a healthy diet. In some children, this leads to a lack of iron and anemia. The sugar in many drinks also leads to tooth decay.



### How Do I Wean My Baby from the Bottle?

Weaning starts early as babies learn to eat cereal and drink from a cup. Here are some tips that can make weaning easier:

- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle. Instead rock or hold your baby while she goes to sleep.
- Only offer breastmilk, formula, or water in the bottle.



- When your baby can sit up, at around 6 months, give your baby juice in a cup.
- Use a cup without a lid.
- At 9 or 10 months of age, replace one bottle-feeding at a time with a cup. Start with your baby's least favorite bottle-feeding.
- Take bottles away slowly. Gradually remove the bottle at other meals and give your baby breastmilk or formula in a cup instead.

Around a year, your baby will be drinking from a cup at most meals and snacks. After your baby turns 1 year old, you can replace the last bottle of the day with a cup.



## Sippy Cups Can Cause Tooth Problems

Sippy cups prevent spills, but they can cause your baby's teeth to rot. Do not let your child walk around with a sippy cup of milk, juice, or another drink with sugar in it. As she walks your child can let the liquid sit on her teeth. The sugar in milk and other drinks can then rot your child's teeth.

## Tips For Dealing with Toddlers

When you go out with your toddler, carry healthy snacks such as fruit or crackers in a plastic bag. They can take the place of a bottle if your child is hungry while you are out.

If your toddler needs to do more sucking, give her a pacifier or a bottle of water.



## Weaning Tips

If your toddler will not give up the bottle try this:

- Add water to the milk that is in your child's bottle.
- Do not let your child see you add the water to the milk in the bottle.
- Do not add water to the milk your child drinks from a cup.
- Keep adding more water to the milk in the bottle, if your child will not give it up.
- When your child notices the taste difference, agree with him that milk in the bottle does not taste as good as milk in a cup.

If your toddler liked formula, but does not like milk:

- Gradually add milk to the formula offered in a cup.
- Start with about 3 ounces of formula and 1 ounce of milk.
- Add another ounce of milk and subtract another ounce of formula in a few days. You will now have about 2 ounces of milk and 2 ounces of water in the cup.
- Take out another ounce of formula and replace it with another ounce of milk in a few days.
- Over time your child will get to like the taste of milk and will give up formula.



If your baby cannot be weaned from the bottle, tell your WIC nutritionist or your doctor.



**Important facts (circle one answer):**

1. Wean your child by:
  - 14 months
  - 18 months
  - 24 months
2. Start your newborn baby off right by:
  - Putting them to bed with a bottle every night
  - Holding or rocking your baby to sleep, then putting her in her crib
3. Drinking extra liquids, even healthy ones like milk or juice, can cause:
  - Colds and the flu
  - A child to become overweight and or develop anemia (low iron)

**Answers**

1. Wean your child by:
  - 14 months
2. Start your newborn baby off right by:
  - Holding or rocking your baby to sleep, then putting her in the crib
3. Drinking extra liquids, even healthy ones like milk or juice, can cause:
  - A child to become overweight and or develop anemia (low iron)