



# Time to Wean?

All nursing mothers eventually wean their babies off the breast. There's no right or wrong time to wean. If you're breast-feeding, you'll want to begin to cut back gradually. This will give your body time to reduce the amount of milk it produces.

- Many mothers wean their babies to a bottle between 4 and 7 months so they can go back to work or allow someone else to help care for their babies.
- Some women wean their children directly from the breast to a cup.
- Some mothers breast-feed the first few months and then change to bottle-feeding.

## Here's How

- If your baby seems uninterested in the bottle or the breast at a time she would normally eat, she may be ready to wean.
- Offer your baby a cup or a bottle.
- Offer pumped breast milk or formula to babies less than 1 year old.
- You can use whole cow's milk for babies older than 1 year.
- It's best to wean gradually.

## Breast to Bottle

If you're weaning from the breast to the bottle, here are some tips to make the transition easier for both of you.

- Avoid abruptly stopping breast-feeding; it can be traumatic for your baby and painful to your breasts.
- Begin by giving your baby a bottle occasionally.

- Expect resistance from your baby if she's never been given a bottle before.
- Encourage Dad, a sibling or a grandparent to offer your baby the bottle. She'll most likely object if Mom is the one offering the bottle. In fact, Mom may need to be out of the room when the bottle is offered.
- Many babies lose interest in the breast once the bottle is offered. Bottle-feeding is less work for the baby.

## Weaning to a Cup

Usually between the ages of 10 and 12 months, a baby can begin to drink from a cup with help. This may be a good time to begin cutting back on the bottle or the breast.

- Skip an occasional feeding. This works well if your baby is showing some disinterest in feeding. Offer a cup instead.
- Shorten nursing time. Depending on your baby's age, you can follow the meal with a healthy snack, apple juice or cup of milk. *(Note: Babies 6 months or younger may not be ready for solids.)*
- Postpone and distract. Try postponing feedings. If you're dealing with a toddler or older baby who's asking for the breast, offer to feed her later or offer a snack, a cup of juice or milk.