



How to wean off the bottle or breast

When to wean off the bottle or breast

There are good reasons for weaning the bottle or breast, aside from encouraging your child's development and independence. Most parents start to wean their babies from the breast or bottle to a cup at about **1 year** of age. This is not an overnight process, you need to plan ahead. Weaning from the bottle is not something you want to rush so when your child is **11 months old** it will be time to think about starting the process. Your child should be sitting on their own, eating from a spoon and showing interest in solid food when they are ready to be weaned. Meals and snack times should be consistent to help your child get into a feeding routine.

Signs to look for if your baby is ready to start weaning:

- Looking around while breastfeeding or drinking from a bottle;
- Mouthing the nipple without sucking; and
- Attempting to slide off your lap before finishing nursing or rolling around while drinking from a bottle.

Schedule to wean:

You will gradually wean one bottle a week. As soon as you start the weaning process, stay consistent. It is extremely important that you stick to your plan for your child to be successful.

1. The **first** bottle to go is the **3:00 pm** after nap bottle. Your child will go to the table for snack time and be offered a cup of water and a snack.
2. The **second** to go is the **10:30-11:00 am** after nap bottle. Your child will be offered a cup of water. At this time when lunch is served your child will be offered a cup of whole milk.
3. The **third** bottle **6:00-7:00 pm** evening bottle. Offer your child a cup of whole milk with dinner.
4. The **fourth** bottle to go is the early morning **6:00 am** bottle **at home** when they first wake up. My recommendation would be to put your child in their highchair and offer them some water or you could offer half water/half juice. When your child arrives at Almost Mom for breakfast your child will have breakfast along with a cup of water or half water/half juice.
5. The **last** bottle to go is the before bed bottle. This will be the hardest bottle to wean from due to the fact that the bottle or breast are sources of nighttime comfort and your child could have a more difficult time giving it up easily. Try to introduce other comfort objects, such as a stuffed animal or blanket, and try not to let your baby fall asleep with a bottle in their mouth. It may take up to 2-4 weeks to make this transition.

Important information about your child's health and bottles:

A child who continues to drink from a bottle at night or at naptime beyond 18 months to 2 years can risk tooth decay, particularly if your child falls asleep with the bottle in their mouth and un-swallowed milk remains on their teeth. Drinking from a bottle after the age of 2 can also start reshaping the upper gum line and palate, which can lead to an overbite.

Bottle drinkers tend to ingest more milk, while milk is a healthy food, children who drink too much of it may not want to eat enough solid food, missing out on important nutrients.

With a little patience and a lot of love, understanding and hugs, you and your child can say “bye-bye” to the “ba ba” forever.