

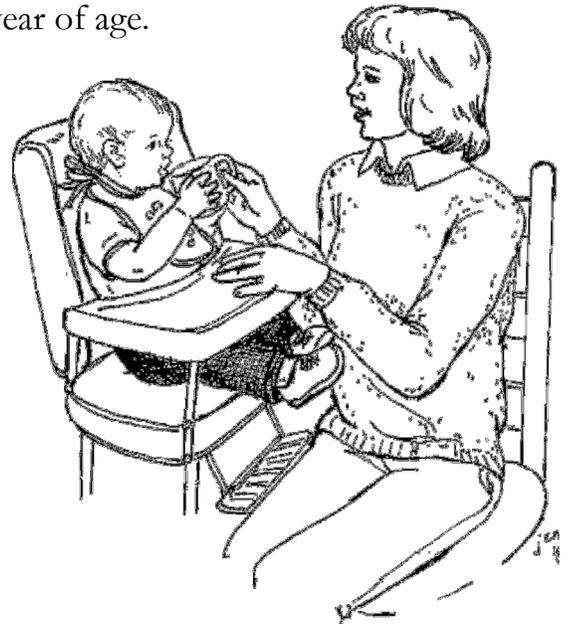
Weaning Your Baby: Cup Feeding

Weaning is the time when your baby learns to drink from a cup instead of from a breast or bottle. Infants usually stay on formula until their first birthday. Give **formula** in the cup instead of cow's milk if you wean your child before one year of age.

When to Start

The age of weaning is different for each baby. Most are ready to start learning to use a cup by 6 to 12 months of age. The baby should be able to sit up well without support before you begin weaning. Encourage your baby to give up the bottle when he or she shows any of these signs:

- Shortens his or her breast-feeding time.
- Is easily distracted when held for a feeding.
- Wants to hold the bottle alone.



Picture 1 Help your baby learn to use a cup.

How to Begin

At about 9 months of age, you may start to place an empty cup within the child's reach so your baby can get used to the cup.

When you drink from your own cup, your baby may try to imitate you by bringing the cup to his mouth. When your baby can hold the cup, begin weaning by using one of these methods:

Weaning Gradually

- Try using a trainer cup with two handles and a snap on lid.
- Start by filling the cup with water at 1 meal each day.
- Next, replace 1 breast-feeding or bottle feeding a day with a cup feeding. This is a new experience for your baby, so take your time and help with the cup. The first feeding you replace is your choice. A good place to start is the feeding your child resists least.

Continued on page 2

Weaning Gradually, continued

- After the child adjusts to taking this feeding from a cup, replace a second breast feeding or bottle feeding with a cup feeding. This may take a few days or weeks, depending on the child.
- Continue to replace bottle feedings until your baby is no longer feeding from the bottle. Breast-feeding can continue beyond 1 year of age, but the child should also be drinking other liquids from a cup.
- It's best not to start giving a baby a bottle in bed, but if your child does take a bottle to bed, stop this feeding first. The use of a nighttime bottle can cause tooth decay because the formula sticks to the teeth and germs grow, causing cavities. (See the Helping Hands: *Dental: Baby Bottle Tooth Decay*, HH-IV-12 and *Dental: Teeth and Gum Care for Infants and Toddlers*, HH-IV-29.)
- Ear infections may also occur more easily when your baby has a bottle in bed. When the baby is lying down, formula can flow from the throat to the middle ear by way of the eustachian tubes. (Refer to the Helping Hand: *Ear Infection: Otitis Media*, HH-I-54.) Bacteria can grow in this formula and cause an ear infection. Your baby may not want to give up a nighttime bottle, but a small snack before bedtime, a bottle of water, a favorite toy or a bedtime story can replace this bottle.

Weaning In One Step

If your child already can drink from a cup but refuses to do so or refuses to give up the bottle, you might have to take away all bottles completely in one step. This method applies to children 15 to 18 months and older who use the bottle for security or habit and not for food.

To use this method:

- Remove all bottles from the home.
- Be firm and consistent about giving milk or juice from a cup, not a bottle.
- Remember - your child's crankiness will last only a few days!

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor or nurse, or call _____.