

Weaning From the Bottle - Normal

Definition

- Weaning is the replacement of bottle feedings with drinking from a cup. It means an end to nipple feedings.
- Weaning usually occurs easily and smoothly.
- Weaning is harder if the bottle has become overly important to the child.

Goal: Natural Weaning at 9-12 Months

- Children normally show less interest in bottle feedings between 9 and 12 months of age. They lose interest in the bottle if they are also taking cup and spoon feedings.
- Many children start weaning themselves by 12 months.
- After the age of 12 months, the parent often has to start the weaning. The child will usually be receptive.
- After 18 months of age, the child usually resists weaning. This is because she has become overly attached to the bottle.
- For easy weaning have a goal of finishing by 12 months.
- The AAP recommends complete weaning from the bottle by 15 months at the latest.

Care Advice

Natural Weaning: How to Promote

1. **Avoid Excessive Bottle Feedings:**

- After 6 months of age, keep bottle feedings to 4 times a day. Be sure 3 of them are given at mealtime with solids. Your baby can have the fourth feeding before he goes to bed at night.
- Don't use bottle feeds for between meal snacks.
- Don't bottle feed to sleep at bedtime or naptime.
- Stop all night feedings by 6 months.

2. **Hold Your Child for Crying:**

- Hold and comfort your child without feeding if she's upset and not hungry. This can foster a strong sense of security and trust when she's upset.
- If you always feed your child in these instances, your child may learn to eat whenever she is upset.

Don't let the Bottle Substitute for a Pacifier:

- Learn to recognize when your baby just needs to suck. At these times, offer a pacifier instead of food.
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- Feeding your baby everytime he needs to suck can lead to excessive weight gain.
 - After teeth come in, a teether may be helpful.

4. Don't let the Bottle Become a Security Object at Bedtime:

- Your child should be able to go to sleep without having a bottle in her mouth.
- Place your baby in the crib drowsy but still awake.
- Don't bottle feed or hold until asleep.
- She needs to learn how to put herself to sleep. If she doesn't, she will develop sleep problems. These problems will require the parents' presence during the night.

5. Don't let a Bottle Become a Daytime Toy:

- Don't let your child carry a bottle around as a companion during the day.
- This habit may keep him from engaging in more stimulating activities.

6. Don't let Your Child Hold the Bottle or Take it to Bed:

- Your child should think of the bottle as something that belongs to you.
- She won't protest giving it up because it wasn't hers in the first place.

7. Introduce Formula or Breastmilk in a Sippy Cup at 6 Months:

- Exposure to cup feedings will make weaning easier.
- At first, offer the cup after he has drunk some from the bottle. This might be the only way your child will accept the cup.
- By 9 months of age, offer formula or breastmilk from a cup before bottle feedings, but you can continue to directly breastfeed.
- Delaying cup feedings past 9 months makes your child less willing to try them.

8. Introduce Baby Foods (Solids) from a Spoon at 4-6 months:

- Starting foods before 4 months is not recommended. It's not needed for growth and can cause gagging.
- If excl. breastfeeding, it is recommended to delay intro until 6 mo - however, infant's developmental readiness should direct timeline.
- Delaying solids past 9 months runs the risk that your baby will refuse solids.
- Finger foods can be introduced whenever your child develops a pincer grasp. This is usually between 9 and 10 months of age. Once your child can use finger foods, include her at the table during mealtime. She will probably become interested in the foods that she sees you eating. As a result, she will want to have other foods as well as formula.

9. Start Phasing Out Nipple Feedings After About 9 Months of Age:

- Do this anytime your child shows a lack of interest in the bottle. You can offer formula in a cup instead.
- Children normally show less interest in bottle feedings between 9 and 12 months of age.
- You can tell that your baby is ready to begin weaning when:
 - She throws the bottle down
 - Takes only a few ounces of milk and then stops
 - Chews on the nipple rather than sucking it
 - Sucks only for a few minutes and then wants to play
 - She becomes more interested in the world around her
- Don't miss this window of opportunity for child-led weaning.

Call Your Doctor Back If...

- You think your child is not able to give up the bottle
- You think your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

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