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FROM BOTTLE (OR BREAST) TO CUP

Learning about the cup can be a natural progression for you and your baby. There is no one “magic time”, but some of the developmental changes that babies go through around 4-8 months signal they are ready to begin to learn gradually about the cup. Your goal is to have your baby off the bottle by one year of age.

- ✓ Why is it a good idea for babies to be drinking from a cup by this age? Babies have developed a memory (object permanence). If the bottle is part of their routine at this age, they do not easily forget it. Out of sight, out of mind. It is normal for older babies and toddlers to have security objects- toys, blankets, etc. If a child is still on the bottle after 12 months of age, the bottle can become the security object and it is much harder to give up.

Most important, it is the normal age for babies to switch from formula to milk. A baby tends to drink more from a bottle than from a cup. If a baby is still taking a bottle when he/she starts milk, there is a tendency to fill up on milk and not be interested enough in eating solids to have a good balanced diet.

Helpful Hints

- ✓ By age 4-6 months, begin using a cup (any kind) to bring your baby’s lips to allow sips of formula, breast milk or water.
- ✓ By age 6-8 months, begin to use the cup at meals. Offer at least one ounce.
- ✓ Continue to support the cup with your hand as your baby begins his/her own attempts to bring the cup to their mouth. After the drink, put the cup out of baby’s reach to prevent spills.
- ✓ When practicing with the cup, have bottles out of your baby’s sight.
- ✓ Do not give bottles in bed because they can cause cavities in baby’s front teeth. Taking bottles to bed can also increase the number of ear infections.
- ✓ After the age of 4-6 months, try to get your baby back to sleep at night without a bottle. Babies are able to last the night without feeding by this age, and feeding will continue a habit of night hunger.
- ✓ Most babies are down to 4 bottles a day at age 6 months and 3 bottles a day by age 9 months.



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- ✓ After age 6-8 months, try not to allow yourself or your baby to become more “dependent” on the bottle. You will notice a normal decreased interest in bottles by age 8-10 months and the amount of formula taken usually decreases at this age.
- ✓ Try other methods of soothing your baby instead of a bottle. Try humming, talking slowly & quietly, playing games with rhymes, or reading stories from a book.