

Tips for moving from Bottle to Cup

- ☛ Give your child a cup to play with as soon as he/she can hold things.
- ☛ Introduce a cup when you start weaning your child around 6 months, even if very little is taken from it.
- ☛ Ensure your child is sitting upright before offering food or drink.
- ☛ If you have a lidded cup, simply remove the lid for your child to practise.
- ☛ Mess is normal – be prepared!
 - There will be less mess if food and drink are kept in one place
 - Lay down newspaper or plastic sheets in the food or drink area
 - Practice in the bath or outside
 - Fill the cup with only 2cm of water, then top up as necessary
- ☛ Keep the bottle out of sight, especially when offering a drink from a cup.
- ☛ Never leave your child alone with a drink at sleep times.
- ☛ Break the habit of drinks during the night - this can be the hardest time to stop giving a drink in a bottle
 - Replace the bottle with another form of comfort, such as cuddles, a bedtime story or a favourite teddy bear or blanket!
- ☛ Your child may give up his/her bottle for a cup with a favourite cartoon character on it. Now it is your child's 'special cup'!

Moving on to a cup may not be easy and may take longer than you think, but it will be worth all your hard work!

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Growing Up, Use a Cup!



It is important to introduce your child to drinking from a cup from **6 months** of age. By the age of **1 year**, aim to have your child drinking from a cup only and no longer using a bottle.

This is because **long-term health problems** can result from inappropriate and extended use of bottles, including:

- Tooth decay
- Poor feeding techniques
- Food refusal
- Iron deficiency anaemia
- Failure to thrive
- Speech and language problems
- Childhood obesity

| Suitable drinking vessels | Unsuitable drinking vessels |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Open top/lidless cups – to encourage your child to move on from a sucking movement | Bottles with a teat - require sucking and tongue-thrusting, which affects speech and language development and can also increase the risk of tooth decay |
| Doidy cups (sloping lidless cup) - for teaching cup control | Valved feeder cups - also known as no-spill cups, which require sucking and can cause the drink to swirl around your child's teeth, increasing the risk of tooth decay |
| Free-flow lidded beakers - fluid can flow without sucking | |

Drinking from an open-top cup:

- ✓ Gives your child independence.
- ✓ Practices co-ordination.
- ✓ Teaches sipping and swallowing rather than only sucking.
- ✓ Liquid is sipped and goes to the back of the mouth instead of pooling around the front teeth.



Milk and water are the safest drinks for your child's teeth between meals.

Other drinks can increase the risk of tooth decay, as the sugars in the liquid constantly hit the teeth, softening the tooth enamel each time.

Drinks containing sugar (including natural sugars from milk) are particularly harmful to teeth if given before sleep. This is because saliva, which helps to protect teeth, is reduced during sleep.

This risk is increased if the drink is offered in a bottle.