

Time to Stop Using Bottles

There are many reasons parents do not take away the bottle:

- The baby loves it so much.
- The family cannot stand the crying.
- It is easier to give a bottle than a cup.
- Parents do not want baby to grow up.
- Someone makes the parent feel bad about taking the bottle away.

But there are even BETTER reasons why you should take bottles away. Staying on the bottle too long can:



- Rot a child's teeth. This "baby bottle tooth decay" can hurt their adult teeth.
- Cause low iron levels in the child's blood.
- Ruin a child's appetite for other foods.
- Cause overweight.
- Cause ear infections.

If your child is over 1 year old and still drinking from bottles, here are some things you can do:

Get your child to give up the bottle gradually.

- Offer a cup instead of a bottle.
- Replace the bottle with a cup one feeding at a time. Do this for a couple of days until your child gets used to it. Then pick another feeding to use the cup.
- Put less milk in the bottle each day. If your child must have a bedtime bottle, put plain water in it.





NOTE: If your child gets sick, don't go back to using a bottle at the cup feedings. But wait until your child is feeling better to take away more bottles.

Take the bottle away completely.

- Get rid of all the bottles. Have your child throw all the bottles into the garbage or pack all the bottles away yourself.
- Be ready for about 3 nights of crying. Each night there will be a little less. By one week, your child will be in a new routine.
- Start a new routine at nap or bedtime. Read a story. Give a cup of milk and a snack and then wipe or brush your child's teeth. Make it a special loving time because your child is going through a big change.

Helpful hints

- Give your child lots of hugs, love and special attention.
- Tell your child often what a "big girl" or a "big boy" he or she is.
- Don't back down! It will just be harder later on.



Good luck!