

# HEALTHY BEGINNINGS

## SAY GOODBYE TO THE BABY BOTTLE

### Help your baby or young child give up a baby bottle

Many parents struggle with transitioning their child from a bottle to a regular cup. Some children use a bottle for comfort, especially at bedtime. Bottle feeding may be a special bonding time for you and your child.

Your child is ready to be introduced to a cup at six months of age. A regular cup teaches your child drinking skills. By your child's first birthday, they have the ability to drink all of their liquids from a cup. By 18 months, it is recommended that bottles and sippy cups are no longer used.

If you are breastfeeding, you can continue to breastfeed for up to two years or longer while offering a cup.

### WHY STOP USING A BOTTLE?

Using bottles for young children, especially for drinks other than water, increases the risk for:

- **Early tooth decay.** Many drinks such as milk, formula or juice contain naturally occurring sugar. Drinking from bottles or sippy cups throughout the day can expose your child's teeth to sugar, increasing their risk of early tooth decay. Bedtime bottles can cause liquid to pool in the mouth causing tooth decay

- **Less interest in eating at meal or snack time.** Some children who fill up on fluids during the day may not be hungry for foods served at meal and snack time
- **Growth concerns.** Some children drink too much milk and other fluids when drinking from a bottle. This can lead to having too many calories and may contribute to unhealthy growth
- **Iron deficiency.** Using a bottle longer than recommended is associated with a higher risk for iron deficiency from drinking too much fluid and not enough solid foods. Symptoms of iron deficiency include irritability, and slow growth and development

### WHAT KIND OF CUP SHOULD I USE?

- Choose a regular, open cup instead of a sippy cup. Your child can drink from the same type of cup as you
- Sippy cups are not the same as a regular cup. Sippy cups or spill-free training cups do not help your child develop drinking skills
- You can make the cup special. Let your child pick out a cup at the store. Or, ask a family member to give your child a new cup

### PUBLIC HEALTH

1-800-361-5653  
TTY 1-866-512-6228  
[york.ca/feedingkids](http://york.ca/feedingkids)

## TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD SAY “BYE BYE” TO THE BOTTLE

Moving from bottle to cup can be a time of mixed emotions. Your child is growing up and no longer needs a bottle. It is normal to feel a bit sad during this time. Remember, your child is learning a new skill and reaching a new milestone.

There are many ways to transition your child from baby bottle to cup. There is not one way that works best. Do what you feel is best for you and your child.

- Set limits on when your child can have a bottle. For safety reasons, do not let your child have a bottle while walking, riding in the stroller, playing or while falling asleep
- Decrease the number of bottles given in a day, one at a time. Replace the bottle time that is your child’s least favourite with a cup instead. The bottle time that is most important to you and your baby should be the last one to go. Often this is in the morning or at bedtime.
- Start offering liquids in a regular cup. Put only water in the bottle. This can also be done gradually so that after a week or so there is only plain water in all bottles
- Fill the bottle less and less each time your child has one
- Try a different activity when you would normally offer a bottle, for example, go to the park or read a book to your child



## TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD SAY “HELLO” TO THE CUP

- Offer a healthy snack with a drink in a regular cup when you would normally offer a bottle
- During this time, have someone else feed your child. Your child might better accept a cup from someone else
- Give choices involving a cup, “would you like your milk in the blue or red cup?”
- Be a role model and drink from a cup when your child does

Be consistent with offering a cup instead of a bottle to help your child transition more easily. They may be upset at the beginning, but in time, they will adjust.

## WILL MY CHILD GET ENOUGH MILK IF I TAKE AWAY THE BOTTLE?

Children aged 12 months and older only need 500 mL (2 cups) of homogenized 3.25% milk each day. At two years, children can switch to 2%, 1% or skim milk. It is much easier to drink from a bottle, so your child will likely drink less milk as they move to only drinking from a regular cup. For most children, this is not a concern as many are already drinking more milk than they need.

To help your child get enough milk during the switch, offer small servings of milk (125 mL or ½ cup) in an open cup at scheduled meal and/or snack times.

For more information and additional nutrition resources, visit [york.ca/feedingkids](http://york.ca/feedingkids). Speak to a registered dietitian at no cost by calling Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.

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