



Drinking from a cup...

Best for baby's health

When your baby is around 6 months old, you can start to teach them how to sip drinks from a cup.

Good reasons to move from a bottle to a cup

A bottle gives food and comfort to many children, so letting your little one use it for as long as she/he likes might seem harmless enough. But, there are reasons why you should switch to cups:

- **Risk of tooth decay**



Letting babies comfort suck on a bottle throughout the day or leaving a bottle with them overnight, can soak your baby's teeth in drinks and can lead to tooth decay, particularly if it happens often. Milk contains natural sugars, which can build up around the baby's teeth at night. The germs on the teeth can turn the sugars into acids, which eat away at the enamel of baby teeth and lead to a cavity. Other sugary drinks such as juice or cordials can do the same.

- **Risk of ear infections**

When a baby drinks from a bottle lying down, infant formula and other drinks can flow through to the ear cavity, which can cause ear infections.

When to change from bottle to cup

- **At 6 months** your baby can begin to use a cup. Water should be offered in addition to milk feeds when introducing solid foods at around 6 months. The water should be **cooled**, boiled tap water.
- **At 12 months** your child should be encouraged to drink only from a cup. Tap water is suitable.
- **At 18 months** your child should be drinking from a cup.

What to look for in a cup

- Snap on/screw on lids
- Handles
- Easy to wash
- Avoid cups with straws, teats, sprouts or valves that baby has to suck on



Helping your baby to drink from a cup



- Let your baby play with a cup to get used to holding it
- Offer a drink from a cup when they want a drink
- Expect spills and dribbles as they learn
- If you only breastfeed go straight to drinking from a cup
- Cut down the number of times you give drinks in a bottle, use a cup instead or replace drinks with a healthy snack
- Talk to your child health nurse for support and more ideas

Remember a bottle out of sight is out of mind



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