



How will my baby learn to drink from a cup?



“Babies love being like a big person by drinking out of a cup!”

Moving from drinking from a bottle or breast to drinking from a cup will take lots of practice, lots of spills and lots of encouragement.

Babies who continue to use bottles after 12 months are more likely to get tooth decay (from sugar drinks that stay in their mouth), ear infections (from lying down while drinking) and iron deficiency (from drinking too much milk and not having enough diet variety!).

Note: A child needs to be able to drink from a cup before they go to kindy and school.

- **Start with small plastic cups** with an easy to clean spout! These will be lighter and easier for baby to hold. You may want to consider ‘spill-proof’ cups for less mess.
- Start with just **small amounts of cooled, boiled water** in the cup – so that when baby spills the water, then they won’t be swamped or burnt!
- Make sure baby can **sit well** – upright, stable and happy in high chair with fitted tray.
- Baby can start trying to drink cooled, boiled water from a cup after 6 months. Let it become part of normal routine to eat a meal and drink water from a cup. To start with, breast and bottle feeding can continue along with using a cup.
- Playing in the bath with cups and containers can help baby to develop confidence in holding the cup.
- **After 12 months, help your baby to give up the bottle** and to drink only from a cup (but breastfeeding can also continue if already established). It’s better if baby does not fall asleep with the bottle or breast in their mouth – as they can easily develop tooth decay due to the milk sugars staying in their mouth while they are asleep.
- **By 18 months, your toddler should be drinking independently from a cup** and eating independently. *Note:* If mother and toddler decide that they want to, breast feeding can also continue past this time.

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