



It's Time to Wean

Your child began weaning when she started eating solid foods and drinking from cups. Now it's time to finish. Your child should be completely weaned from bottles at 12 to 14 months old.

Why does my child need to stop bottles?

- **Your child is ready to wean.** She can drink from a cup, and she cares about pleasing you. Weaning is harder if you wait.
- **Weaning keeps your child's teeth healthy.** Children who still use bottles after 1 year old get more tooth decay. This is also common in children who take bottles to bed.
- **Children who wean from bottles are healthier.** They get fewer ear infections and are less likely to be overweight. They also have more iron in their blood.



How can I wean my child? Children can wean in different ways. Here are some suggestions to try.

- ➔ Limit the number of bottles, and offer more drinks in a cup. Give hugs and cuddling instead of extra bottles.
- ➔ Give whole milk in a cup with all meals. With snacks, give water or WIC juice in a cup (give juice once a day, only 4 to 6 ounces).
- ➔ When your child is used to milk in a cup, pick a bottle feeding to stop. It's best to start with the least favorite bottle. Wait 3 or 4 days, then stop the next, least favorite bottle. Continue until you stop all bottles. Replace each bottle with cups and extra cuddling.



- You may need to wean the last bottle slowly. Try putting less milk in it each day for a week. Then have your child give their bottles to someone else's baby, or throw them away.



- Share your plans for weaning with caregivers and family members. They can help make weaning a success!

Bedtime without bottles

Try new ways to get your child to sleep.

- ✓ Give your child a warm bath to relax. Then offer a snack and brush teeth.
- ✓ Read a book, or rock and listen to quiet music.
- ✓ Put your child in bed. If he cries, come check him, but don't pick him up. Talk to him quietly, then leave the room. Wait longer before checking him each time.
- ✓ After a few nights of crying, your child will learn this new routine and forget about bottles.
- ✓ If you must give a bottle, only put water in it.



Some children wean quickly, and some take weeks.

Once you start, stick with it! Don't give back bottles that you have stopped. Your child may cry but **you're doing the right thing!**

Hawaii WIC Program/Department of Health

Oahu: 586-8175 Neighbor Islands: 1-888-820-6425

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