



## ORAL HEALTH KANSAS

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### Tips and Tricks: **Weaning from Bottle to Cup**



A bottle gives food and comfort to many children. Letting children use bottles for as long as they want might seem harmless enough but using a bottle after age 1 puts your baby at risk for cavities, malnutrition, obesity, and ear infections.

#### **How can I tell my baby is ready to wean?**

The best sign for knowing it is time to start weaning is when your baby can sit without support. Other signs to look for: showing an interest in solid food, readily eating from a spoon, and settling into a regular mealtime. Here are two different approaches you might choose to use. Experts agree that whichever method you use, sticking to it is key.



#### **Immediate Withdrawal**

Abruptly stopping use of a bottle is the quickest yet most difficult for parents, because it feels cruel. When using this method, here are suggestions for easing the way.

- Let child choose a special or new cup before starting
- Offer reward (not sweets) for going all day or all night
- Serve healthy snacks or offer comfort objects at bottle time
- Distract with other activities



#### **Gradual Withdrawal**

Slowly reducing daily bottle usage takes more time but is generally better accepted by the child.

- Begin using a cup at child's least favorite feeding time
- Drop one additional bottle feeding each week
- Use familiar liquid (breast milk, formula) to start
- Use a cup at mealtime when child can model others



Stopping nighttime bottle feeding may be the most difficult. Try replacing with another nighttime routine, such as Brush, Book, Bed from the American Academy of Pediatrics.