



# Bye Bye Baby Bottle

## Helping your 1 to 3 year old stop using a bottle

Parents often struggle to get rid of the baby bottle. Start teaching your baby to drink small amounts from an open cup after 6 months of age to make the transition easier. Stop using all baby bottles by 18 months of age.



### Why stop using the bottle?

Children who continue to use a bottle with any liquid other than water after 1 year of age are more likely to:

- Have tooth decay in their baby and adult teeth
- Grow too slowly or too fast
- Not get enough vitamins and minerals
- Have iron deficiency anemia

### Here are some ideas to help your child say bye bye to the bottle:

- ✓ Offer a cup to drink from at every meal and snack.
- ✓ Make sure your child eats enough during the day:
  - ❑ Offer a routine bedtime snack before brushing your child's teeth.
  - ❑ Offer 3 meals and 2-3 scheduled snacks every day.
  - ❑ Fill the night bottle with less and less liquid so your child is hungrier during the day.

- ✓ Set an example. Sit with your child at meals and snacks so that your child can see you drinking from a cup.

- ✓ Limit the number of places your child can be while drinking a bottle. Be firm. Do NOT let your child have a bottle while walking around, playing or going to sleep.



- ✓ Make the cup extra special. Ask a grandparent or another important person to give your child a new cup to bring home or let your child choose a cup at the store.



## Other tips

- ✓ Water is best. Slowly switch to water in the bottle. Dilute the milk or juice in the bottle with water over 1–2 weeks until you are only offering water.
- ✓ Fill the bottle with less or eliminate one bottle feed each day.
- ✓ “Lose” the bottle. You need to be strong for up to 3 nights in order to not find it again!
- ✓ Have a party! Help your child celebrate growing up by throwing away the bottle together.
- ✓ Leave it at home. Don’t bring a bottle with you when you leave the house.

## Can a “sippy cup” be a problem too?

- Sipping on drinks with sugar (e.g. juice and milk) throughout the day can lead to tooth decay.
- Most drinks except water have natural and/or added sugar.
- Offer only water between meals and snacks.
- If you use a sip cup, take out the valve to teach your child to drink without sucking.

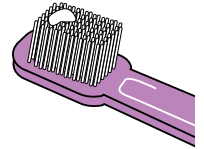


## If you switch to a cup, will your child get enough milk?

- Children over 12 months only need about 500ml (2 cups) of milk each day.
- Children do not need juice. Whole fruit is a healthier choice than juice. If offering juice, choose 100% juice and no more than 125ml (½ cup) per day.
- Offer milk and juice in an open cup and only with meals or snacks. Have your child sit at a table when drinking milk or juice.

## What else can you do?

- ✓ Brush your child’s teeth twice a day with a toothpaste containing fluoride.
- ✓ Be a role model! Demonstrate behaviours you want your child to develop.
- ✓ Comfort your child without a bottle. Try rocking, singing, cuddling or offering a favourite toy.
- ✓ When offering drinks, only give your child choices that involve a cup. For example, “Would you like the milk in your blue cup or your red cup?”
- ✓ Rules will help your child. Don’t change them because your child is upset.



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**Other fact sheets on parenting your toddler  
are available at your local Community Health Office/Centre  
or online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>**

For more information, call:

Dial-A-Dietitian..... (604) 732-9191

or a Community Nutritionist or Community Health Nurse at Vancouver Coastal Health  
[www.vch.ca/community/community\\_health\\_centres.htm](http://www.vch.ca/community/community_health_centres.htm)

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