

Weaning Baby



When is the best time to wean your baby or toddler? The answer is, there is no real solid answer, and it is really a matter of when you or child is comfortable with weaning. The American Academy of Pediatricians recommends that babies be breastfed a minimum of one year, and the World Health Organization recommends a minimum of two years. This is because research has shown that breast milk is the best source of nutrition for a baby. Studies also show that in cultures where children are allowed to nurse for as long as they want the children usually will wean themselves at about three or four. However babies in the US usually are only nursed for their first year of life. Weaning is a very personal decision and should be done whenever mommy or baby is ready based on your needs and lifestyle.

It is recommended that a mother who is breastfeeding does not abruptly stop. It can be hard on the baby who has grown accustomed to breastfeeding and can lead to hormonal changes during the first few months of the child's birth and bring on depression for the mother. It can also make the mother's breast very painful as her body still produces milk and it can bring on mastitis, a breast infection. Experts also recommend that weaning be done during a time that is not stressful as this is a big change for mother and baby and a stressful time can make it much more difficult. When you want to stop breastfeeding you should do it little by little over several weeks to ease the transition for mom and baby.

The beginning of weaning for most children begins at about six to eight months when your child is introduced to solid foods. Your child will be getting nutrients from solid foods and may not need as much breast milk as before. Try to start by skipping one nursing session everyday and try to make it a time that is not the baby's favorite nursing time, usually early morning, naptime and bedtime. Instead of this session give your baby a cup or bottle to drink from with either formula or whole milk or it is sometimes recommended to use a mixture of formula and whole milk and gradually introduce whole milk. Keep doing this for a few days every so often eliminating a nursing session until you are no longer breastfeeding. If your baby does not want to take a bottle from mommy try these tips to get your baby drinking from the bottle.

- Have someone other than mommy give the baby the bottle and have mommy stay in another room as even her voice can distract the baby's feeding.
- Hold the baby in a different position that is not like he or she is breastfeeding. For example hold them facing you on your lap. Once the baby takes the bottle you can cradle them again.
- Propping a bottle up is dangerous for the baby make sure someone is there holding the bottle at all times, the baby could choke because the bottle milk may come out too fast.

Whenever you decide the time to wean is right for you just remember to take it slow and listen to your body and your baby.