

moving on to cups

Ideally an open cup should really replace the bottle at around one year of age. Here's why:

Learning to use a cup...

- Develops the muscles that help babies learn to babble and talk
- Helps establish a good eating pattern
- Helps prevent tooth decay
- Helps promote a healthy weight
- Helps prevent iron deficiency by limiting excessive milk intake.



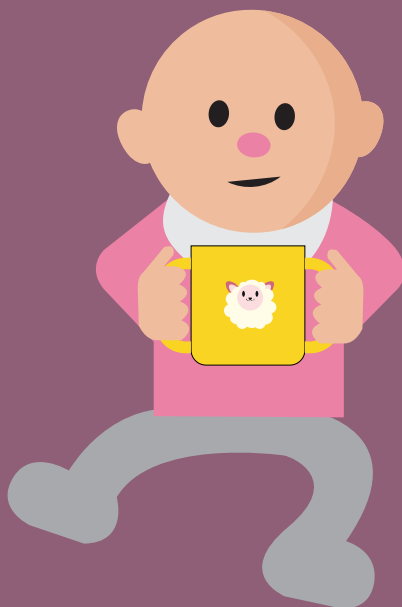
As babies get older, drinking too much milk can fill them up and stop them eating the foods they need to grow properly.

At one year of age about 300ml of milk a day is sufficient. Using a cup will help to prevent a baby from drinking too much milk.

When's best to start?

Once your baby is sitting up and able to hold their head steady, they can start to learn how to drink from a cup. This usually happens at around 5 to 6 months.

You could even give them an empty cup to hold and play with when they are younger (from about 3 months).



Do they need a special cup?

- No! A child's plastic cup with two handles and no lid is best
- You could also try a free-flow lidded beaker (these let the liquid run out when held upside down).

Then remove the lid as soon as they've learnt how to drink.

Cups and beakers with non-drip valves don't teach baby how to sip. Sipping helps to develop the muscles used for talking.

Getting started

Learning to drink from a cup takes time and can be messy. But with your help, baby will learn.

- Less stress and more fun! Choose a time of day when you and baby are relaxed and not tired – and expect some spills!
- Start with a small amount of water or milk in the cup. To begin with you might need to hold a cup against baby's mouth
- Remember, this is new to your baby. If they reject the cup to start with, just try another time.

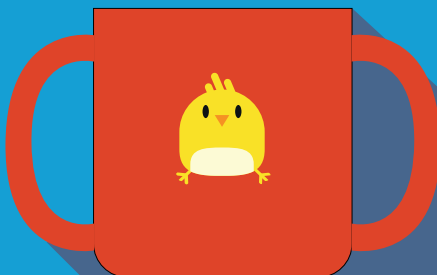
Top tips

- Reward your baby for using the cup with lots of praise, smiles and play
- Try different cups. They may prefer different colours or the feel of different textured material
- Avoid giving baby a lidded cup or bottle to help them get to sleep. This can be very bad for their teeth and a hard habit to break
- Brush teeth twice a day.

At 1 year +

Your baby does not need a nighttime bottle if they are one-year-old and eating three meals during the day.

If they wake in the night, try soothing them with a cuddle and then follow the normal bedtime routine.



What drink should I give?

Milk and water are the best drinks for babies, toddlers and young children.

- You can offer breast milk or formula milk or tapwater from a cup. From one year, they can also have full fat cows milk
- Babies don't need any type of juice or squash, including baby juice. But if you do decide to give it, dilute one part pure juice to at least 10 parts water
- Avoid fizzy, sugary drinks and those containing caffeine eg. tea for as long as possible. Remember, children won't miss what they've never had
- Whatever your child's age, milk and water are the best drinks. But if you do give an older child squashes, flavoured milk, smoothies and juice drinks, follow these simple steps to protect their teeth:
 - Keep drinks other than milk and water to mealtimes only
 - Give drinks in a cup not a bottle or a lidded beaker
 - Make sure squash or juice is always well diluted.

Safety tips to prevent choking

- Never leave your baby alone when drinking
- Set a baby upright when drinking
- Never put solid food eg. rusk or baby rice into a bottle or beaker.

For more support and advice, ask your health visiting team, dietitian or at your Children's Centre



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