



"Hello Cup..."

Learning to use an open cup can be messy, but with your help and patience, your child can learn this important skill. Drinking from an open, lidless cup (i.e. not a sippy cup) helps your child to:

- learn mature drinking skills,
- adapt to a meal and snack routine,
- protect their teeth from cavities, and
- develop their speech.

Did you know?

- Babies can start to use an open cup at about six months of age for sips of water.
- Children who breastfeed might never need bottles; they can simply start using an open cup. Breastfeeding can continue to two years of age and beyond.
- Babies who are fed formula can usually switch to cow's milk between nine to 12 months of age. Aim to provide 2 cups (500 mL) of milk per day.
- Juice is not needed. If you choose to offer it, wait until your baby is at least six months of age. Choose 100% pure fruit juice, limit it to ½ cup (125 mL) per day and offer it at a meal or snack time.

Help your young child to use an open cup

- Start slow – offer sips of water in a small open cup.
- Offer a cup with each meal and snack.
- Offer milk in an open cup and only at meal or snack times. In between, offer water for thirst.
- Sit with your child and role model the use of an open cup.
- Your child might want a “special” cup - or one just like yours!
- At first, they will need your help, but soon they can learn to manage on their own.

If you have questions about feeding your infant or toddler, call 811 (or 604-215-8110) to speak with a Registered Dietitian at HealthLink BC.

...Bye-Bye Bottle"

It can be hard to stop using a baby bottle. However, after one year of age, children who use a bottle with anything other than water are more likely to:

- have cavities,
- not get enough of certain nutrients, such as iron, and
- grow too slowly or too quickly.

After one year of age, help your child say “bye-bye” to the bottle

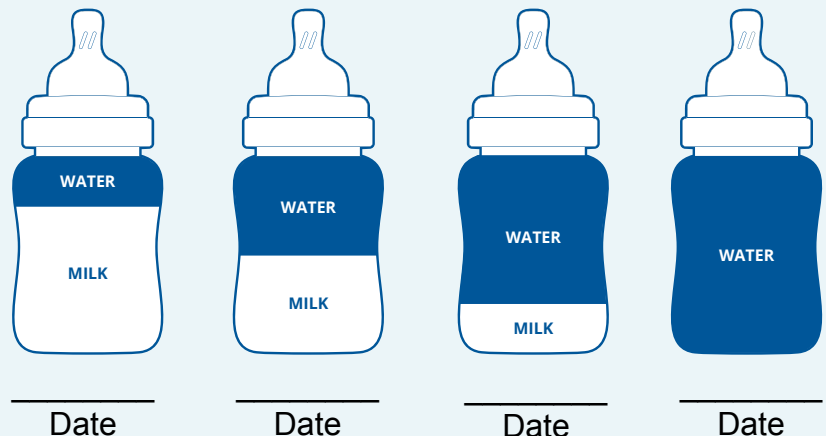
- Teach your child to use a cup before removing the bottle.
- Choose an approach that feels right for you and your child:
 - “lose” the bottle,
 - help your child to throw the bottle away,
 - reduce one bottle feed per day,
 - fill the bottle with less fluid, or
 - limit where your child can have the bottle.
- Offer comfort in other ways: cuddles, songs, or a favourite toy or blanket.

Another option: make the switch to water

If your child is more than one year old, and you find it hard to stop using the bottle, you can switch to water in the bottle. Do this slowly by diluting the milk with more and more water, until you are offering only water in the bottle. (Milk can be offered in an open cup at meal or snack times.)

Tips

- Choose a “dilute” start date.
- Increase the ratio of water to milk every three or four days, until you are offering only water in the bottle.
- Aim to complete this process in a few weeks.



Bottle images used with permission from First Nations Health Authority (2018)

The tips listed above can also help your child to say “bye-bye” to the sippy cup, or help you to move towards offering only water in the sippy cup.