3 good reasons to give up the bottle

Babies that continue with bottles after 12 months are more likely to get:

- **tooth decay** - from milk, flavoured milk/milo, juice, soft drink, cordial, sweetened drinks
- **ear infections** - from lying down while drinking
- **iron deficiency** - from drinking too much milk and not having enough variety in their diet.

The longer you leave it past 12 months, the more knowledgeable your child becomes and the harder it is for them to give up the bottle.

Put your baby to bed without a bottle

Helping your baby give up the bottle

- **Introduce** a cup from 7 months with a little water.
- **Replace** a bottle with a cup at 9-12 months once every day for a week, gradually increase so all daytime feeds are from the cup.
- **Remove** bottles from sight—pack them up with your child’s help and ‘send’ the bottles away.
- Once you make the decision to use a cup at night time, **don’t go back**, they will get used to it. Even if they reject the cup and cry, don’t give in - this will just confuse them and make it harder in the long run.
- **Create new bedtime routines:**
  - Bedtime story
  - Bedtime song
  - Cuddly toy
  - Extra cuddles
  - Soothing music
  - Read a book

Teach your baby to drink from a cup

Best for baby’s health

7 months and older
At 6 months
Baby has mainly breastmilk (or if unavailable, infant formula).
Baby begins to eat solid foods.

At 7 months
Baby begins to:
• drink water
• use a cup.

7-12 months
Baby still has breastmilk (or if unavailable, infant formula).
Baby learns to:
• drink from a cup
• eat family foods.

Help your baby to give up the bottle and drink from a cup.

By 18 months
Baby is:
• eating independently
• drinking from an open cup.

Breastfeeding may continue past 18 months if it suits mother and child.

What your baby can drink

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0-6 months</th>
<th>6-12 months</th>
<th>12-24 months</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Breastmilk (recommended)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Infant formula if breastmilk is not available</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Water (whenever thirsty)</td>
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* or other dairy food:
250mL milk = 150g yoghurt = 2 slices cheese (40g)

Free flowing drink bottles can be used for water ONLY.
Sipping juice or milk from a drink bottle increases the risk of tooth decay.