

# Saying goodbye to the bottle!

## **1. When:**

- Your baby can start using a cup from 6 months.
- You may need to hold the cup to their mouth. Try a 'non spill' cup.
- Try to stop using a bottle by the time your baby is 12 months old.
- Around 12 months of age, your child may be able to hold a cup and drink from it by themselves.
- For older babies who have been breastfed you may be able to go straight to drinking expressed breastmilk, infant formula or water from a cup.

## **2. Why:**

- After 12 months, bottle feeding can cause tooth decay.
- Sometimes children who use a bottle drink more milk than they need because it is easier than eating.
- Milk is filling and can stop children from eating other important foods. At 12 months of age your child only needs around 500mL of milk a day.

## **3. If your child is attached to their bottle try these tips:**

- Change between the cup and the bottle.
- Only give water in the bottle. This will make them want the bottle less. It is also better for their teeth.
- Encourage your child to use a cup (and give up the bottle) by giving them a special cup and making a big deal of them growing older.
- If your child has a bottle before bed or at rest time try to change the routine. Try swapping the bottle for a cuddly toy or read them a story in bed instead.

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**Note:** Don't lay your baby down flat with a bottle to sleep. This puts baby at increased risk of choking. It can also cause tooth decay.

#### **4. For toddlers and older children**

For toddlers that may not want to give up the bottle the same tips as above apply. Other tips that may help are:

- Talking with your child - that now they are older they no longer need their bottle.
- Giving the bottles away to another baby.
- Give a reward - such as stickers for the number of days they do not have their bottle.

Nagging your child about giving up the bottle may make them worried and less likely to give it up.