

How do I teach my baby to drink from a cup?

Why should my baby drink from a cup?

Babies learn how to use different muscles in their mouth and jaw when they drink from an open cup. This helps them learn how to talk and be ready to eat solid foods. They also practice hand-eye coordination when they drink from an open cup.

It's important for babies to learn how to use a cup by the time they turn 1-year-old.

Long-term bottle use can be harmful to their health. Completely switch your baby from a bottle to an open cup around 1-year-old to help protect them from:

- Ear infections
- Low iron levels
- Cavities and tooth decay
- Developmental delays

When do I introduce a cup to my baby?

Offer an open cup to your baby when they're **about 6 months old**. They should be able to sit without support and curve their lips around the rim of a cup before you introduce it to them.

Babies learn about the world around them through touch. Let them play with an empty cup first so they can learn the shape, weight, and feel of the cup. They'll be able to explore the cup and won't spill or drink the liquid too fast.



What type of cup should I offer my baby?



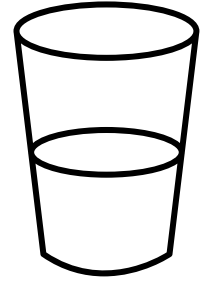
Offer your baby an open cup—this means no straws, lids, or spouts. It's okay to have your baby use a sippy cup or other training cups sometimes. However, these do not teach your baby the important skills they learn only when they use an open cup.

It takes time for your baby to learn! Practice will help them be ready to get rid of their bottle and only use open cups by the time they turn 1-year-old.

- Give them a lot of praise and patience.
- Show them how **you** drink from an open cup.
- Put small amounts of liquid (1 to 2 ounces) in the cup when they're first learning.

What should I put in my baby's cup?

Offer small amounts of water, breast milk, or formula in an open cup. Water will be the easiest to clean up and least wasteful when they first practice! Put 1 to 2 ounces of liquid in their cup. Offer breast milk or formula in an open cup after they've had some practice with water.



Babies don't need juice or other sweetened drinks like sports drinks or fruit punch. These have a lot of sugar and not many nutrients. This will make your baby feel full without getting the important nutrients they need to help them grow.

How much should my child drink?

Age	Water	100% Juice	Milk
6 to 12 months old	4 to 8 ounces (½ to 1 cup) each day	None	Breast milk or formula only
1 year olds	8 to 32 ounces (1 to 4 cups) each day	None	16 ounces *cow's milk (2 cups) each day
2 to 5 year olds	8 to 40 ounces (1 to 5 cups) each day	4 ounces (½ cup) or less each day	16 to 24 ounces *cow's milk (2 to 3 cups) each day

*Children ages 12 to 24 months are advised to drink whole milk. Children 2 and older are advised to drink nonfat (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.

What if my baby doesn't want to use a cup?

It takes time for your baby to get used to a cup. Here are some tips to help.

- **Lead by example.** Show your baby how to drink from a cup by drinking from one yourself. Babies learn by copying their parents.
- **Make it fun.** Use colorful or character-themed cups.
- **Timing matters.** Offer the cup when your baby isn't too hungry or tired. Your baby is more likely to try something new if they're calm and happy.
- **Start slowly.** It's okay to use sippy and transition cups sometimes. Offer an open cup at 1 mealtime a day to start with and go from there.

Talk to your baby's doctor if your baby always refuses the cup or if you're worried about your baby's development.