

Weaning Your Baby... ...from Breastfeeding



Only you can decide when it's time to wean.

The **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** recommends that mothers breastfeed for up to a year or longer if this works best for you and your baby. Most mothers choose to wean their baby when they are 4 to 7 months old, according to the AAP.

What's the best way to wean?

Use a gradual approach. Try these methods:

Reduce feedings. Depending on the age of the child, offer your baby a bottle or cup of milk instead of nursing. Tapering off how often you feed will help your child and you to adjust. Your milk supply will slowly diminish, which can prevent engorgement. Don't rush.

Limit nursing time. Shorten the amount of time your child is breastfed. Cut nursing time in half. Depending on your baby's age, follow the shorter feeding with a healthy snack.

Skip and distract. Try postponing feedings if you're only nursing a couple of times a day and your child is older. If your child wants to nurse, try distracting him or her with an activity. Make sure you give your child plenty of attention during the weaning process.

Set a Date. Pick a deadline to stop breastfeeding. Allow yourself and the baby several weeks to stop weaning, which may be enough time to deal with any setbacks.

Breastfeeding creates an intimate activity for you and your child. Letting go may challenge each of you. Do it when you feel ready.