




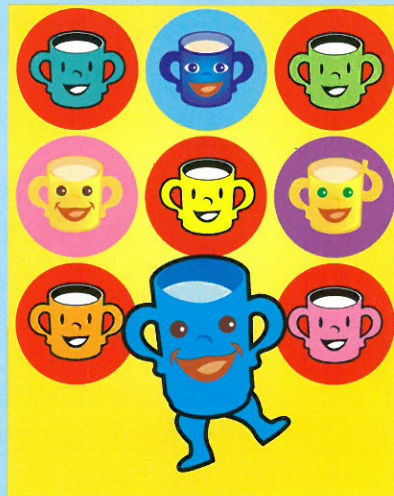
## How old is too old for a bottle or a dummy?

 In their first few months of life, babies have a natural sucking reflex. This makes breast-feeding, bottles and dummies very comforting for them.

 But as babies grow, they need to learn to make different movements with their mouths to learn to speak and eat properly.

 Once you have started to introduce a beaker, you should begin to reduce the use of a bottle or dummy. Start by removing them whenever possible during the day. Then restrict them to bedtime, and remove as soon as your baby is asleep.

Remember, **tooth decay** can result if you give drinks other than milk or water by feeding bottle, or if you dip a dummy in food or drink – especially if they contain sugar.



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## Cool kids use cups





A better way to give drinks to your baby – 6 months +


For further information contact your **Health Visitor** or **Dental Health Promotion** or **Community Dietitian**



# Some helpful tips about giving drinks to your baby

 You can start giving drinks from a cup when your baby is 6 months old.


 A good time to start using a cup is when you introduce your baby to first weaning foods.


 A cup without a lid is best because it encourages your baby to develop a sipping action when drinking. If a lidded cup is used, it should allow the fluid to drip out if the cup is up-ended.



Milk and water are the only safe drinks for teeth.



 **Keep positive!** Give your baby plenty of encouragement to learn to drink from a cup. Your aim should be to **make the changeover from breast or bottle to cup by your baby's first birthday.** This will protect teeth, help to establish good eating patterns, and help avoid speech problems.

 Encourage drinks at mealtimes rather than making drinks continually available. Lots of drinking can lead to children having a poor appetite and refusing food because they feel too full up.

Never leave your baby alone when drinking because of the risk of choking.



**Keep encouraging your baby to use the cup.** Be patient if there are spills and accidents.

