

# Breastfeeding Weaning Guide

Professional Patient Consultation Materials

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There is no single "right" time to wean. Health experts recommend exclusive breastfeeding for about 6 months, then continuing alongside solid foods for 2 years or longer as long as it works for both you and your baby. Weaning is a personal decision, and the best time is when you and your baby are ready.

## Signs Your Baby May Be Ready:

- At least 6 months old and eating solid foods well
- Show less interest in breastfeeding or easily distracted during feedings
- Can drink from a cup and is comfortable being soothed in other ways

## A Step-By-Step Gradual Approach

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Gradual weaning is the safest and most comfortable approach for both parent and child. Sudden cessation can lead to breast engorgement or mastitis.

**PHASE 1** Drop one feeding at a time (often a midday feeding) and replace it with a bottle, cup, or solid food.

**PHASE 2** Wait 3 to 4 days before dropping the next feeding to allow your milk production to adjust naturally.

**PHASE 3** Keep the most comforting feedings—the first morning and bedtime feedings—for last.

### Managing Comfort

- Express small amounts of milk for comfort only
- Apply cold compresses (15-20 min)
- Wear a supportive, non-restrictive bra
- Consider Sunflower Lecithin
- Ibuprofen/Acetaminophen for pain

### Nutrition by Age

**Under 12 Months:** Use infant formula rather than cow's milk for all replacements.

**12 Months+:** Introduce whole cow's milk (approx. 16-24 oz per day).

**Iron Intake:** Prioritize iron-rich foods like fortified cereals and beans.

## Emotional Support & Routine

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It is normal to feel sadness, guilt, or even relief. All feelings are valid. To help the transition:

- **Don't offer, don't refuse:** Follow your baby's lead without initiating nursing.
- **Routine Shifts:** Avoid nursing locations, like a specific favorite chair.
- **Partner Involvement:** Let others handle bedtime or bottle feedings.
- **Alternative Bonding:** Use skin-to-skin contact, reading, or rocking for closeness.

### WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR PROVIDER

Seek medical advice if you develop a painful, red area on the breast or fever, if the baby is not gaining weight, or if you experience significant mood changes, anxiety, or depression.

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For further questions, please reach out to your specialist:

**Melissa Horton, PA-C | Certified Breastfeeding Specialist**

Women's Health First: 847-808-8884