

Arkansas WIC Breastfeeding Helpline

(WIC de Arkansas Línea de Ayuda para la Lactancia)

1-800-445-6175



BreastMilk
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100% Natural

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Breastfeeding and Weaning



Thinking about ending breastfeeding is not easy for nursing moms or babies. Weaning can happen with peace and ease when both mom and baby are ready.

Natural weaning begins when you first offer your baby any food or milk other than breastmilk. Weaning is complete when breastmilk is fully replaced by other milk or solid foods.

When should my baby fully wean from breastfeeding? ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

There is no set age to fully wean from breastfeeding. The average age around the world when babies are weaned is three to four years old.

Health experts recommend breastfeeding for at least 12 months and longer, as long as the mother and child desire. In the end, you and your child decide when it is time to fully wean.

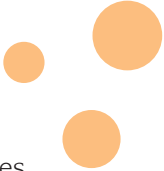
How will I know when it is time to fully wean my baby? ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

There are only a few reasons when it is *time* to fully wean your baby. With many common concerns, weaning does not have to happen. Ask your counselor for ways to overcome the concerns shown on the following page.

Reasons to fully wean ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

- Child is **past one year** old and is **ready**
 - Eats a variety of foods
 - Is comforted in ways other than nursing
 - Would rather play than nurse
 - Shows little interest in nursing
 - Falls asleep without nursing
 - Easily distracted with other activities
- Mom is ready to wean

Common concerns – No need to wean ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

- Baby starts teething
 - Baby over one year of age
 - Social pressure
 - Working or school
 - Nursing strike
 - Feeling overwhelmed
 - Common cold and many other illnesses
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Caution!

Some moms think their baby is fully weaning, when they are actually going through a “nursing strike”.

A nursing strike is when a baby suddenly refuses to nurse and is unhappy. Some common causes are outside distractions, changes in routine, mom’s fear of biting, stressful nursing times, use of bottles or pacifiers, and delayed nursing time. Talk to your breastfeeding counselor if this happens to you!

How do I wean my baby? ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Weaning works best when it happens slowly and naturally. All moms and babies are different. Use the weaning approach that works best for your needs.

- **Baby-led weaning** allows the baby to gradually move his food intake from breastmilk to more solid foods. The baby decides how much he will eat through self-feeding. He also decides when he is ready to fully wean.
- **Mother-led weaning** allows mom to slowly remove one or several breastfeeding times and replace them with other foods or formula. The baby still decides how much he will eat, but mom decides if the intake is breastmilk, other milk, or solid foods. Mom also decides when full weaning occurs.
- **Partial weaning** allows mom to slowly replace some breastfeeding times with other milk feedings or solid foods when she will be away from the baby. Moms who work, attend school, or have busy schedules may use partial weaning to continue some breastfeeding benefits.
- **Temporary weaning** allows mom to stop feeding at the breast for a short period of time while taking an unsafe medication, having surgery, or medical testing done. The baby receives other milk and or solid food during that time. Mom keeps her milk flowing by pumping but throws away the milk if it is unsafe for the baby.

- **Emergency weaning** is weaning that completely stops all feedings from the breast in a very short period of time. The reason for weaning might be an emergency situation or a sudden medical condition. Emergency weaning can be stressful for both mom and baby if done too quickly.



Steps to Full Weaning ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Babies – birth to 6 months of age

- Replace one breastfeeding with a formula feeding.
- After 4 to 5 days replace another feeding with formula.
- Continue at this rate until all nursing at the breast is stopped.
- Give iron fortified formula by bottle.

Babies – 7 to 12 months of age

- Replace one breastfeeding with formula by cup.
- After 4 to 5 days replace another feeding with formula by cup.
- Continue at this rate until all nursing at the breast is stopped.
- Gradually introduce solid foods.

Babies over 12 months of age

- Stop the least favorite nursing time first and replace with whole milk, juice or water by cup.
- After 4 to 5 days, replace another feeding until all nursing at the breast is stopped.
- Offer 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks every day.
- Choose a time when the baby is not sick.
- Give lots of love and attention.

- Keep your baby busy with playing games, reading books or taking a walk.

....If your baby refuses the formula:

- Mix a small amount of formula with pumped breastmilk in a cup or bottle.
- Slowly add more formula and less breastmilk each day.
- Allow time for the baby to accept the change in taste.

Weaning Tips for Mom ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

- Wean gradually over at least a month or more.
- If breast fullness occurs after you omit a breastfeeding, hand-express or pump just enough milk to prevent discomfort.
- Remove less milk each day.
- Cover your breast with ice packs for a few minutes whenever they feel too full.
- Wear a supportive bra that is not too tight.
- Call your doctor if you see redness on your breast, feel bad or get a fever.



**MOM'S
BODY
CHANGES**

After Weaning

- Your menstrual periods may return before, during, or after weaning.
- Some mothers gain weight while others lose weight.
- Your breasts may change in size, shape, and feel.
- You may continue to make small amounts of milk for many months.
- Hormone changes may make you feel a little emotional.
- If you feel very sad or depressed, talk about this with your doctor.



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