

Breastfeeding As Baby Grows FAQ

Only you and your baby can know when to stop breastfeeding. Breastfed babies usually do not need any other foods until about 6 months of age. Once you start giving solid foods, the amount of breastfeeding will naturally go down. The American Academy of Pediatrics encourages babies to be breastfed until at least their first birthday. By this time, most babies are only nursing a couple of times a day.

Q: Will I have to stop breastfeeding when my baby has teeth?

A: No! Baby doesn't use the teeth for nursing, so there should be no biting. Sometimes babies might bite a little when releasing the breast. If baby bites, take baby off the breast, ask baby not to bite, and then allow baby back on. Repeat this as many times as needed to train baby not to bite. (Information on biting)

Q: All of a sudden, my 9-month old baby didn't want to breastfeed anymore!

A: Sometimes babies will go on 'nursing strikes.' It is part of their beginning to explore the world. Work with a lactation consultant or La Leche League leader to think of ways to encourage baby back to the breast. (Information on Nursing Strikes)

Q: I'm afraid people will criticize me if I breastfeed my baby after 1 year.

A: The decision as to when to wean your breastfeed infant is determined by mom an infant. (Information on extended breastfeeding beyond one year)

Q: How do I wean my baby?

A: In general, weaning is a gradual process. This lets both baby and your body get used to a new routine and the need for less breastmilk. Start by dropping one nursing a week and substituting with either iron-fortified formula (if under a year of age) or other healthy foods and drinks (if over one). Also start to offer your baby or child other ways to be comforted instead of by breastfeeding, like a snuggly toy or blanket, a hug, or reading a book. Eventually you will drop off most nursing sessions and it will feel like the right time to stop completely. (Information on weaning)