



Weaning

If you are considering weaning, please do not hesitate to talk to us about your feelings. Helping you to wean safely and comfortably is just as important to us as helping you to breastfeed.

How Do I Decide if I Should Stop Breastfeeding?

The decision to stop breastfeeding is often a difficult one. It is normal for women experiencing difficulties with breastfeeding to want to stop one day and to feel the opposite way the next day. Also while breastfeeding can be resumed after a period of weaning, it can be difficult. Because of this you may want to give yourself several days before making your final decision to wean. One way to decide if weaning is best for you and your baby is to ask yourself if your efforts to breastfeed are interfering with your relationship with your spouse, other children, or new baby.

When Should I Not Wean?

It is not advisable to stop breastfeeding if you have mastitis or an abscess. Continuing to remove the milk from the breast is an important part of the treatment of these conditions. The best way to accomplish this is to nurse the baby. If you still wish to stop breastfeeding after your mastitis or abscess is cleared, do so as described in the next paragraph.

How Do I Wean?

When a woman stops breastfeeding, it can take a while for the breasts to stop making milk. Weaning suddenly can result in uncomfortable filling of the breasts with milk. This may lead to further complications, such as mastitis and plugged ducts. Because of this, it is best to wean gradually.

There are two ways to wean gradually. One way is to gradually increase the number of bottles a baby receives each day. Each bottle substitutes for a breastfeeding. In this way, the breasts have a chance to gradually slow down the production of milk.



If you wish to stop nursing more quickly, the other way to wean is by "pumping down." With this method, the baby is not put to breast at all. Instead, a small amount of milk is pumped or expressed from the breasts. If only enough milk to make the breasts comfortable is removed each time, the breasts will gradually slow down milk production until pumping is no longer needed. The pumped milk can be fed to the baby along with his formula.

Some mothers combine both methods with a little bit of nursing, a little bit of pumping and increasing the number of bottles given to baby each day.

What About the "Dry-up Pill" or Breast Binding?

Neither of these methods are used. The "dry-up pill" has caused strokes, seizures and death in women who used it. Breast binding is very uncomfortable for most mothers.

How Long Will It Take for My Breasts to Stop Producing Milk?

The larger the milk supply, the longer it will take. Usually milk production slows significantly after one to three weeks after starting to wean. It is quite normal for small amounts of milk to be produced weeks or months after weaning.