



Weaning

<http://www.pedsalex.com/breastfeeding.php>

Life's rites of passage are produced by a sequence of weanings: weaning from the womb, your breast, your home. The pace of weaning will be personal to each mother-baby dyad, should be respected, and if allowed to culminate organically, will facilitate a secure, happy, independent child.

Weaning, in terms of infant nourishment, is a process of transitioning your baby from breastfeeding to another source of nutrition. It is the gradual progression of changing the breastfeeding dynamic from exclusive breastfeeds to either replacement with formula feeding or supplementing with solids.

The **American Academy of Pediatrics** recommends exclusive breastfeeding through the first 6 months of life. At this time, the introduction of solids should occur with continuation of breastfeeding through 12 months or as long as mutually desired between mother and baby.

Weaning versus Nursing Strike

Generally, if a baby is less than 12 months of age, and they stop breastfeeding abruptly, it is likely a nursing strike. It should not be automatically assumed that baby refusing the breast is attempting to wean. Babies will refuse the breast for many reasons aside from weaning: mouth pain from teething, stuffy nose, distractions/interruptions during feeding times, or unusually long separation from mother. [Click here for ways to stop a nursing strike.](#)

Strategy for weaning

Each mother and baby will have their own dynamic, thus own preference for weaning. Nap and night nursing are favorite feedings and will likely be the last to go. Below is a list of *suggestions* on strategizing your weaning process.

- **Gradually** eliminate feedings from least to most favorite
- Avoid familiar breastfeeding situations (positions and places)
- Stop offering the breast, and only allow to breastfeed if baby's behavior deteriorates
- Keep baby busy and avoid boredom
- Set rules for nursing: appoint particular times of the day for nursing
- Include father more, allowing time with father to replace a breastfeed
- Introduce the cup

When to delay weaning

There are three major reasons to delay weaning. First, if there are major life transitions for your child (recent move, daycare change, death in the family), it is better to postpone weaning until a less stressful time. Secondly, if your baby is ill or teething, they are still utilizing breastfeeding as a comfort. It may take a few weeks, but allow your baby to feel better before initiating the weaning process. Lastly, if food allergies run in the family, it may be beneficial to continue breastfeeding over introducing formula.