

When Your Toddler Stops Breastfeeding or Chestfeeding

Breastfeeding or chestfeeding is recommended for up to 2 years – or longer if you and your child want to continue. Your toddler may naturally stop breastfeeding or chestfeeding (“child-led”), or you may decide to wean them (“parent-led”). In either case, weaning can be emotional for parent and child. Do what works best for you both.

If you choose parent-led weaning:

- ✓ **Start when no other major changes are happening in your family**, like going back to work or school. This way, you won’t add stress to an already difficult situation.
- ✓ **Offer extra comfort and cuddles** to ensure that your toddler is getting as much attention and love as before.
- ✓ **Go slowly.** Weaning gradually – over weeks, months or even longer – allows your milk to reduce slowly, helping you avoid sore breasts or a sore chest. It also lets you and your toddler adjust emotionally, helping you get used to new routines and find new ways of feeling close.
- ✓ **Don’t offer, but don’t refuse.** Keep your toddler busy with other activities. Don’t sit in your usual breastfeeding or chestfeeding spots. But when your toddler does ask to breastfeed or chestfeed, take the time to enjoy it together.

- 1. To start**, replace one of your daily feedings with expressed milk offered in an open cup. If you are not providing your own milk, you can use infant formula. Before 9 months, use store-bought infant formula; after 9 months, you can switch to whole (3.25%) cow’s milk. If they are older than 6 months, you can also replace a feeding with solid food.
- 2. Then, every 5 to 7 days** (or once you and your child are comfortable), replace another feed. Save the feeding that provides the most comfort (usually the first one in the morning or the one at bedtime) for last.
- 3. Finally**, replace the last remaining breastfeeding or chestfeeding.



DID YOU KNOW?

As children learn to feed themselves solid foods, they naturally begin to wean themselves at their own pace.



KEY TAKEAWAY

If it’s not going smoothly or if your child is sick and needs the comfort of breastfeeding or chestfeeding, take a break from weaning.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

When your toddler is down to one breastfeeding or chestfeeding per day, take over that last feeding time. Your child may find it easier to be fed a cup of milk by the non-breastfeeding/chestfeeding parent than by the parent who has been breastfeeding or chestfeeding them.