



Breastfeeding  
Committee  
for Saskatchewan

[www.thebcs.ca](http://www.thebcs.ca)

### Important

*Breast milk is valuable for all babies. It boosts babies' ability to fight infection, is easy to digest, and helps babies grow and develop well. These things are especially important for twins and other multiples who are often born early and may have higher needs.*

### For further information contact:

Local Public Health Nurse

International Board Certified  
Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)

Local breastfeeding support group

Saskatchewan Healthline 811

### References:

Health Canada Statement on Breastfeeding. Retrieved June 14, 2017, from <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/infant-nourisson/index-eng.php>

Mohrbacher, N. (2005). *The breastfeeding answer book* (3rd ed.). Schaumburg, IL: La Leche League International.

# Weaning

## What is weaning?

Many people think weaning just means stopping breastfeeding. Weaning is a process which begins when the baby starts taking anything other than breast milk and ends with the last breastfeeding.

- It is a natural stage in baby's development.
- Health Canada, Dietitians of Canada, and the Canadian Pediatric Society recommends exclusive breastfeeding (no additional food or drink) for healthy term infants for 6 months and continuing to breastfeed for up to two years or longer with appropriate introduction of solid foods.

**Natural Weaning** is letting the baby set the pace for weaning

**Partial Weaning** is eliminating certain nursings but continuing to breastfeed for the rest of feedings. This can be an option when a mother is feeling overwhelmed or mom is returning to work.

**Planned Weaning** refers to the mother deciding to stop breastfeeding before receiving cues from her child that he/she is ready to stop. This can allow the mother's milk to decrease slowly, with less fullness and discomfort. It also gives baby time to adjust to receiving love and affection another way.

- If baby is less than one year of age, you will need to offer a commercial formula in a bottle or cup in place of breastfeeds.
- Eliminate one nursing every few days to allow milk supply to decrease gradually.
- It may take several weeks or months to wean this way depending on how mom and baby are coping. Be sensitive to baby's needs and feelings.
- One gentle way to do this, is "don't offer, don't refuse" where you do not offer feeds if baby is not asking but do not refuse if they are.
- If you are weaning a toddler, the book *Mothering Your Nursing Toddler* by Norma Jane Bumgarner may be helpful.

**Abrupt Weaning** is when breastfeeding has to stop immediately. There are circumstances in which this may be necessary, however it is the most difficult for mom and baby. Mothers are more likely to experience discomfort of overfull breasts. Babies can feel that mom is withdrawing closeness and comfort as this need is also met at the breast along with feeding. It is important to offer other attention and affection to compensate for the loss of nursing.

- If baby is less than one year of age, offer a commercial formula in a bottle or cup in place of breastfeeds.
- When breasts are uncomfortably full, express enough off with hands or a pump for comfort, avoid emptying the breasts fully as this will make more milk.
- You can let your breasts leak in the shower, or lie down in the bathtub.
- Cabbage leaves can be comforting for engorgement. Wrap the breasts in the leaf and change when they get soggy or limp.
- Wear a firm supportive bra. Please note that binding the breasts is not recommended as it can cause plugged ducts or mastitis.

### Just so you know:

- It is normal for the breasts to contain small amounts of milk for months.
- "Dry-up" medications are no longer recommended as they can have serious side effects.

