

My baby refuses to drink from a cup

Q: My baby can drink water from a cup, but refuse milk from it. What should I do?

A: This is probably related to their learning experience. Some parents seldom use cup to offer milk when babies are learning to drink from a cup. Babies, therefore, have little experience of drinking milk from a cup. If parents often use cup to offer water, babies are likely to associate drinking cup with water. As a result, babies can be reluctant to drink milk from a cup even they have learnt drinking from it.

As a parent, you don't need to feel frustrated. With your help and consistency, your baby should learn it through time. It might require a little while for your baby to get use to this new experience. Be persistent with the change – use cup to offer milk. Try not to go back to bottle even if he/she is consuming less milk, and don't allow drinking while he/she is sleeping or lying in bed. If you think your baby is drinking less milk and you are concerning about their calcium intake, you would provide other dairy products and calcium-rich alternatives such as cheese, yogurt and tofu for them. You can also try adding milk in your dishes, for example milk and egg custard, milk porridge.

Q: Can I offer milk to my baby when I introduce a cup to him?

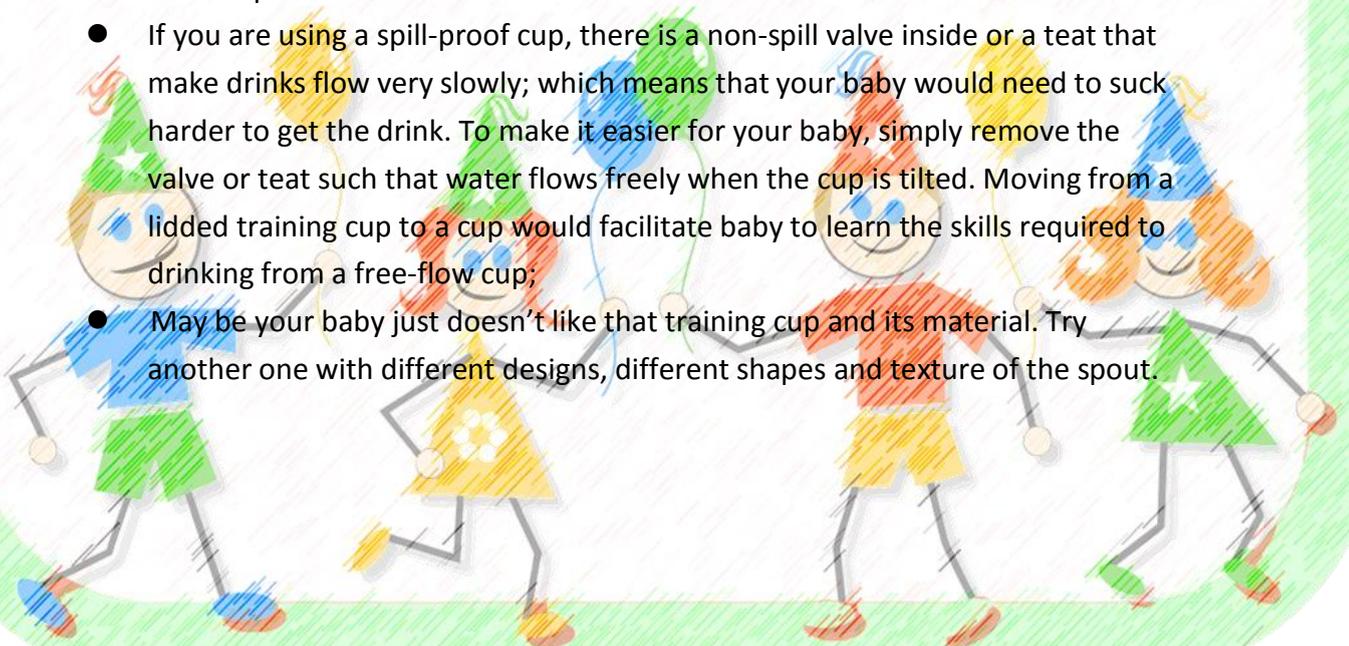
A: Yes. You can put milk, water, diluted juice. In fact, you can put any fluids that are suitable for babies into their cups. This helps them to get familiar with drinking different beverages from a cup and wean from the bottle timely.

Q: What should I do if my baby refuses to drink from a cup?

A: Sometimes babies may refuse using the cup. The following tips help you overcome their resistance:

1. Check the cup

- If you are using a spill-proof cup, there is a non-spill valve inside or a teat that make drinks flow very slowly; which means that your baby would need to suck harder to get the drink. To make it easier for your baby, simply remove the valve or teat such that water flows freely when the cup is tilted. Moving from a lidded training cup to a cup would facilitate baby to learn the skills required to drinking from a free-flow cup;
- Maybe your baby just doesn't like that training cup and its material. Try another one with different designs, different shapes and texture of the spout.



2. Make them feel interested

- Your baby may have refused drinking from the cup because he/she does not aware there is drinks inside;
- Bring some of the drink (either be the water or milk) on to the mouthpiece of the drinking cup, and let your baby have a taste of it - this might just get them interested.

3. Babies love to imitate others

- Drink with them and demonstrate to them;
- Let your baby join the family meals – they are more likely to try when they see others are drinking and eating.

4. Babies only drink very small amount at a time

- Babies usually take a sip each time. They do not drink large amount of water as they get most of the water intake from milk and other moist/soft foods;
- Try offer water more often, make drinking cup accessible for them. Forcing baby to drink or eat can increase their resistance.

5. Offer the cup when they are in good mood

- The best time to encourage your baby to use a cup is when they are wide awake and pleasant;
- Avoid giving your baby the cup to try when they are hungry, thirsty, grumpy, or tired.

Q: My 6 month old is breastfed and has not used the bottle so far. She does not like the training cup. Should I introduce a bottle to her first then training cup?

A: You can offer your baby a training cup directly. When you introduce the training cup, she may refuse it at first because her oral muscles are not ready. Do try again few days later. Most children are able to drink from a cup between 7 to 9 months of age. If your baby has never really used a bottle, you don't need to introduce a bottle and then change to cup. These save you from weaning the bottle to cup in the future.

