

My little boy drinks less milk when I offer him milk in his training cup. What can I do?

Q: My 14-months old kid drinks less milk from cup when I wean him from using the feeding bottle. I concern about the reduced milk intake, what should I do?

A: Some parents worried that their young children drink less water or milk when they weaned from the feeding bottle to cup.

However, this is only a temporary change and parents should take it easy. Young children need some time to learn and get used to the new drinking cup. Once they get familiar with the cups, they can drink freely and as much as they want.

We should not delay introducing the drinking cup and prolong the use of drinking bottle.

Introducing solid foods and drinking cup at appropriate time not only provide suitable nutrition for infants, but also benefit their oro-motor development. Young children should start using drinking cup by 12-months old, and stop using feeding bottle by 18-months old. Upon the beginning of complementary feeding, infants are gradually eating more solid foods more frequently while their total milk consumption inversely decrease. This is a good sign of successful weaning. The frequent, “milk-only” eating pattern is no longer appropriate for a 1-year old. They should gradually have a regular meal pattern of 3 main meals a day and 1-2 nutritious snacks in between.

Young children no long rely on a milk-only diet. Milk becomes a part of nutritious meals consisting of a variety of foods. Parents can provide milk for kids at main meals or snack times as drinks. You can also use milk in different dishes, such as milk porridge for breakfast, a glass of milk with a mini-sandwich for mid-afternoon snack, or milk pudding. These are practical ways for kids to consume milk but not compromising their need to develop solid foods eating.

Milk and dairy products are good source of calcium, which is important for growth and bone health. Department of Health recommends children aged one to five years old to consume 360-480 ml of milk daily to meet their calcium need. Apart from milk, dairy products (cheese and yogurt), calcium-added soy products (such as tofu, dried bean curd), calcium-fortified soymilk, leafy green vegetables are all rich in calcium. Some children may drink less milk when they are older. Parents are advised to follow healthy eating guidelines and provide them with calcium-rich foods in daily. Below are some practical tips for you:

Breakfast

1. Milk porridge
2. Cheese sandwich filling (e.g. boiled egg and cheese sandwich, tuna cheese sandwich)
3. Milk or calcium-fortified soymilk

Lunch/ Dinner

4. Eat beans and tofu (steamed tofu, use tofu or dried bean curd to replace meat in recipes)
5. Leafy green vegetable (e.g. choy-sum, dried bean curd and minced meat stir-fry; choose pak-choy, Chinese kale)
6. Try some Western recipes (e.g. cheese broccoli, creamy cheese sauce pasta, bolognaise with cheese)

Snack options

7. Fresh fruits with plain yogurt
8. Tofu pudding
9. Fruity milkshake (homemade milkshake with no added sugar)
10. Milk pudding
11. Eat nuts & seeds (e.g. black sesame dessert soup, almond dessert soup, boiled peanuts)

