

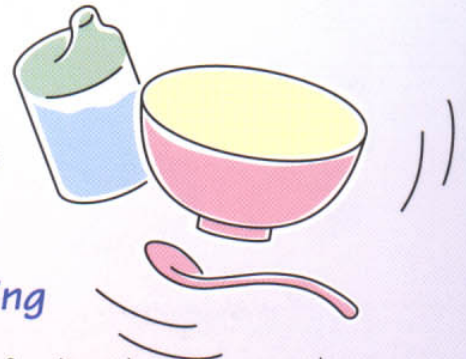
Introduction of Solid Foods

The best time to start solids is when the baby is showing interest in food, which occurs around 6 months of age. There is no need to go in any specific order. Introduce the foods in a way such that they are of great variety. Start with a small amount and increase gradually.

The World Health Organisation recommends that infants be exclusively breastfed for the first six months, and continue to be breastfed, with timely complementary foods up to two years of age or beyond. Breastmilk continues to provide nutritional and psychological benefits for the baby after the age of six months.

Stopping Breastfeeding

The longer you breastfeed your baby, the more benefits you and your baby can have. If for any reason, you wish to stop breastfeeding, you should do it **gradually**. The following steps will help you to minimize discomfort, and to overcome the problems of cutting down / stopping breastfeeding.



★ From Exclusive to Partial Breastfeeding

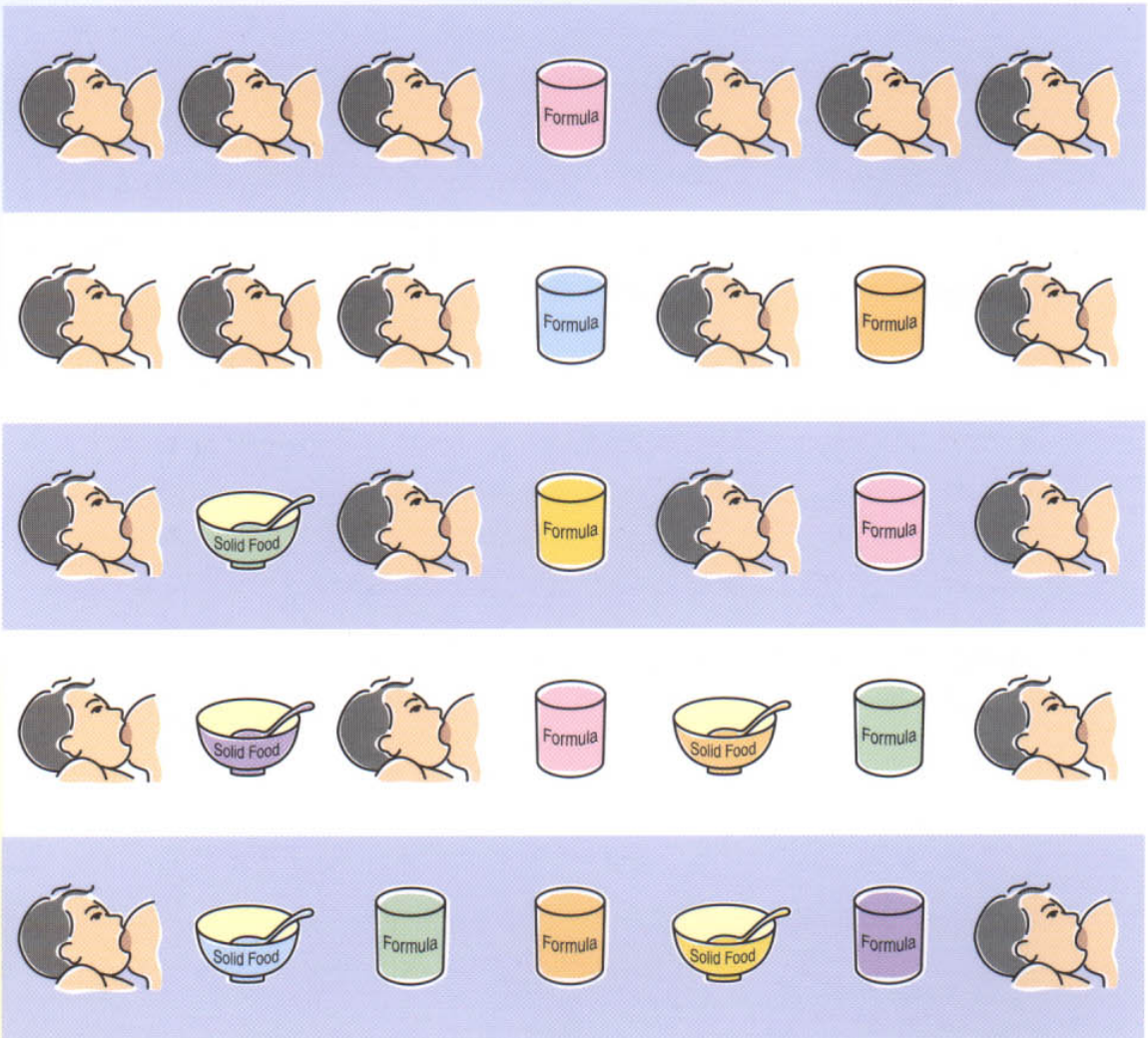
If you need to cut down the frequency of breastfeeding, because you have to return to work or due to other reasons, and your baby is not ready to eat solids, you may have to introduce infant formula. Both you and your baby need to adjust to this change and the process takes about 1-2 weeks. (see diagram)

★ Points to Note During the Weaning Period

- Wear a comfortable and supportive bra without wire.
- Avoid applying hot compress, massaging the breasts or expressing breastmilk frequently. Milk supply will decrease gradually as the demand decreases.

- If your breasts are painful and engorged, you may express **some** milk, just enough to relieve the discomfort.
- Pain-killers (Paracetamol) and cold compress can help to relieve discomfort caused by engorgement.
- During the initial stage of cutting down / stopping breastfeeding, you can expect your baby to be fretful and irritable. But with your patience and understanding, you can help your baby to adapt gradually. Family support is important during this period.
- Use nursing pads/cotton towels to absorb the leaking milk, and change them frequently.
- If you have a swollen, red, painful breast lump, or any other symptoms, seek medical advice.

Diagram: Schedule for Cutting Down / Stopping Breastfeeding



Common Problems of the Mother Who Is Cutting Down / Stopping Breastfeeding

★ *Breast Engorgement*

It is a common condition that may occur during the initial period.

Management

- Wear a comfortable, supportive bra of suitable size.
- If your breasts become too engorged and painful, you may express some milk, just enough to relieve the symptoms as well as to prevent worsening of engorgement (Frequent expression of breastmilk should be avoided, as this can further increase your milk supply). Milk production will gradually diminish as the demand decreases.
- Apply cold compress and take pain-killers (paracetamol) to relieve the pain as required.
- If you have flu-like symptoms for more than 24 hours, or have a painful lump in a breast, seek medical advice promptly.

★ *Leaking Breasts*

Sometimes, milk is released at times when you do not expect it. Thinking about your baby or hearing another baby cry can cause milk to let down.

Management

- Place nursing pad inside the bra and change frequently to keep the breasts clean and dry.

★ *Emotional Upset Due to Guilty Feeling*

Stopping breastfeeding abruptly can sometimes affect the mother's emotional feelings, associated with a feeling of guilt and unhappiness.

Management

- Follow the steps in gradual cutting down / stopping breastfeeding.
- Find someone who is compassionate and willing to listen to your feelings.
- As healthcare workers, we do care for you, and are willing to help you as much as we possibly can.

Common Problems of the Baby When the Mother Cuts Down / Stops Breastfeeding

★ Fretful and Crying

This is a common situation that occurs during the initial period.

Management

- Try your best to be calm and patient, and help your baby adapt to the changes gradually. Family support is equally crucial for you and your baby during this difficult period.
- Whenever the mother bottle feeds the baby herself, he will associate this with breastfeeding. Thus, to enable the baby to adapt to the changes easily, other family members could help the mother by taking turns to bottle feed the baby instead.
- The mother can give him tender loving care and reassurance later by cuddling the baby after a feed.



★ Change of Baby's Stools

The baby's stools colour, odor, consistency, amount and frequency will gradually change with introduction of formula milk.

Management

- You may ask your healthcare worker if you are worried about the changes in your baby's stools. The stool changes are considered normal, as long as the baby is thriving and asymptomatic.
- If your baby's stools are dry and hard, you can give him water in between the feeds.