Your baby is moving toward becoming a toddler in many ways. He may seem more like a young toddler than a baby in many of his behaviors (including his eating), and this will present new challenges to you. Your patience, support, and good humor will help your child move smoothly into toddler-hood.

**FEEDING YOUR ELEVEN-MONTH-OLD**

With a little cutting and mashing, table food can make up most of your child’s diet by now. He is probably drinking milk or formula from a sippy cup with meals and demanding to join in at family meals, if he is not already included.

When your child eats table food and has started drinking from a cup, weaning from breast and/or bottle feeding can be completed. Sometimes this is harder for the parent than it is for the child! Weaning from bottle or breast-feeding is a gradual process and varies in length of time from one child to the next. Again, be sure to follow your child’s lead—as her interest in table food and the sippy cup grows, she will probably lose interest in bottle or breastfeeding, at least at mealtime. Breastfeeding is still good for snacks and for late-night and early morning feedings.

**HINTS FOR WEANING**

- Gradually decrease the number of times your child gets breast milk or formula each day.
- Be consistent. For example, if you have stopped giving your child a bottle at noon, do not “give in” on a bad day.
- Give a fussy baby extra attention with a drink from a sippy cup instead of a bottle or the breast.
- Tell other people who care for your child about your plan for weaning.
- Do not begin weaning when your child is sick or upset.
BABY'S INCREASED INDEPENDENCE

One sure sign of your baby’s growth is an increased independence. Your baby will want to feed himself and may resist your efforts to “help.” This is not a neat, clean time in your child’s feeding experiences but is expected and actually needed for his development. He will learn meals are pleasant, food tastes good, and he is a pretty smart person for being able to feed himself. He doesn’t know about messy and naughty habits yet—those are adult views of events. So, remind yourself this stage will pass, prepare an area that is cleanable afterwards, and join your child for a pleasant meal! Your child will repay your attentiveness to his “requests” by becoming a more reasonable, agreeable toddler.

NUTRITIOUS FOOD AND DRINKS

Your baby is still fairly young and can only hold a small amount of food and liquid at a time. Be sure food and drink you offer is healthy and nutritious! Sometimes parents or relatives think it is cute to offer baby soda pop, candy, or rich desserts. Babies are even more attracted to sweets and sugar than adults are, and their strong liking of sweet, “empty-calorie” foods—foods that add calories but not much else in the way of nutrition—will develop quickly if they are introduced to these foods. So resist the urge to offer these foods to your child. There will be plenty of time later for her to discover them. Right now, offer nutritious meals, snacks and drinks.

References: