



TIPS AND TRICKS SERIES

Sippy Cups — Friend or Foe?

Sippy cups can help during the transition from bottle to cup, but they are a short-term tool and should be phased out as open cup skills develop.

Why it matters:

- Frequent sipping throughout the day keeps sugar and acids on the teeth longer, increasing the risk for cavities.
- Long-term sippy cup use can affect speech, swallowing skills, and oral health. Children need practice learning to drink from a regular cup.

What to do:

- Use a sippy cup only as needed, such as during travel or between meals.
- Offer water between meals and milk with meals.
- Help children practice using an open cup as they grow.

What to avoid:

- Avoid sugary drinks, including juice and flavored milk, in sippy cups.
- Do not let children walk or run while sipping to reduce choking risk.
- Do not use a sippy cup as a pacifier or toy.

Choose a better cup:

- Use a cup without a valve to support normal drinking skills.
- Use two handles if needed for early skills.
- Move to an open cup as drinking skills improve.



By Age/Stage:

- Infants: Sippy cups can help during the transition from bottle to cup.
- Toddlers: Encourage more open cup practice.
- Age 3 and older: Children should no longer rely on sippy cups.