

# Your Guide to Weaning Your Breastfeeding Baby!

Let's be honest, your weaning journey can either be an easy one or a hard one. I've learned over the years not one *WEANING* journey looks the same for baby or mother. No matter if you're breastfeeding for 3 months or 2 years, it can be challenging to try to figure things out. Let alone deal with the mental part of weaning, but we will talk about that later.

*Did you know there's two types of WEANING:*

## Mother-Led & Baby-Led

**WEANING!**  
**MAMA, ARE YOU READY? OR IS BABY READY?**

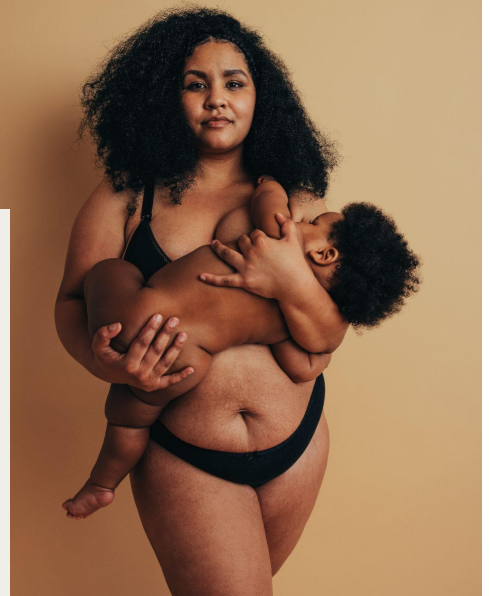
**MOTHER-LED WEANING**

Mother-led weaning means YOU decide when the time is right. Drop one breastfeeding or pumping session per week and replace it with a milk alternative or solid foods depending on child's age. This weaning process can be done gradually or if needed in an accelerated way by dropping a feeding every 2-3 days instead of one per week. You can also play around with your feedings and do what feels right for you. For example some mothers like keeping the night time breastfeeding/ pump session and dropping all other feedings gradually first.

**BABY-LED WEANING**

Baby-led weaning means older babies lose interest and start to wean on their own. This may begin as they increase solid food intake and become busy explorers. Baby-led weaning is a slow & steady process that occurs over several months. Key is to follow your child's lead! A tip for this type of weaning is: Don't offer; don't refuse. [TheLactatingMama.com](http://TheLactatingMama.com)

Ok, Now The Big Question, "Is It That Time?!"



\*After you've figured out which weaning route you're headed down (mother-led or baby-led) now it's important to think things out.

*Here are a few tips to help guide you along your way:*

- ☐ **Make a Plan & Commit.** Yes, seriously! Trying to wean without a plan can add stress you don't need let alone want. Believe me! Creating a simple plan of action can be:

(1) I will cut out our first feeding of the day and offer formula, dropping an additional feeding every 2 days and offering formula during those feedings, too. This would be a plan for children under 1 years old.

OR

(2) I will cut out our mid day feeding first and offer solids. Cutting a new feeding at the breast every day or every 2 days. For other feedings during the day I will follow my child's lead. This would be a plan for a child 1 years old +.

*Making a plan and committing can help greatly.*

- ☐ **Get Your Family on Board & Think Positive.** Yes, please! When everyone is on the same page it makes the transition for everyone much better. Remember, this is a new stage of your little one's life. Although your journey is ending, a new one is beginning. Time to make new memories. Positive thinking is key!
- ☐ **Be Prepared.** Let me say that AGAIN... BE PREPARED! Now this is not to scare you, it's to prepare you for the possible roller coaster ride of weaning. Like I said in the beginning, this journey can be easy or this journey can be challenging. It's important to be prepared for possible:

*The Lactating Mama*  
Mom may experience

- Engorgement
- Fever
- Mood swings
- Hot flashes

Child may experience

- Insomnia

- Crying and fussiness
- Formula/ supplement rejection

\* It's important to note if you do experience certain side effects they do not last. Taking things slow is ideal to limit the side effects of weaning for both mother and child.

- ☐ **Last but not least, “Be Open”.** I say this because it's okay if you decide after trying to wean you're just not ready. Had a change of heart?! MAMA, THAT'S ABSOLUTELY OKAY! I know I know, you're probably thinking she said COMMIT. Hey, I also know we deserve to give ourselves some grace sometimes. So, if you're having a hard time and want to nurse your baby or offer them some pumped milk, then you do so. You can always try again the next day. Small steps do matter!

*Weaning can be challenging for many children and even many moms. I always suggest that moms start the weaning process slowly, if possible.*

*Here are more example of how you can start your weaning journey:*

**Decrease the amount of time the baby spends at the breast.** Mom can drop 1 feeding every 2-3 days. This helps babies get used to nursing less, as well as helps moms adjust to the hormonal decrease of prolactin and oxytocin. Mom can decrease another feeding on day 3 or 4 depending on how well the child is adjusting. Many times starting with dropping a mid day feeding is easier then starting with the first or last feeding of the day. Also, moms who notice that their baby is less interested in a certain feeding of the day, dropping that feeding first may be ideal.

**Use the “don't offer, don't refuse” method.** This means mom will Breastfeed when asked by the baby, and don't offer when the baby doesn't. This simple method usually works best for children over the age of 1yrs old.

**Decrease milk production.** Moms can start to decrease milk production by wearing cold cabbage leaves. Cold cabbage leaves are known to help “dry up” milk production. This will discourage babies from nursing many times and babies will start to nurse less, or even become uninterested in nursing when supply is steadily decreasing.

**Ask for support.** If possible, get help from a partner or other household members. So, if the baby usually nurses upon waking, try getting up before your baby and have your partner or someone else take over the morning routine to create a new “normal” & help distract your little one.

**Try distracting your child from nursing.** So instead of nursing, try offering snacks, cuddles, hugs and playtime to replace nursing.

## The weaning process no matter which route you take can be physically painful!

*Here are some tips that can help you manage the Pain & Discomfort:*

- Apply cold cabbage leaves as mentioned above to help with inflammation. You can do this daily and as often as you need.
- Try drinking peppermint tea. This has been known to help decrease supply greatly. You can have this as often as you like.
- Enjoy some pineapple juice. Pineapples are a natural anti-inflammatory that is known to alleviate engorgement, too.
- Hand express a little milk to relieve discomfort, but I suggest not to nurse or pump. Remember, removing milk will signal the body to make more milk.
- Use a cool compress to help with pain. Some moms respond well to this. You can alternate between warm and cool compresses, as well, but it's never advised to use a HOT compress.
- Try a gentle massage. Massaging the breast downwards towards the nipple. I recommend massaging the breast often, and at least 3-4 x a day. This helps to prevent clogged milk ducts or more serious issues. Note: Massage shouldn't hurt or cause more discomfort. You should be gently massaging the breast to help move milk out.
- Baths with essential oils, peppermint and sage can help as well.
- Take a cool or warm, NOT hot shower. Showers will become your Breast Friend.
- If the pain is too much to handle you can always take pain medicine.

- Try sudafed to help decrease supply. This is a over the counter medicine that is known to help decrease milk production

Please keep in mind that the emotional and hormonal effects of weaning can cause mothers to feel depressed, extreme sadness, and even guilt etc. This is something that is not talked a lot about in the Lactation Community. Download your copy of "[Life After Weaning. How to Restore Wellness After Breastfeeding](#)". It can definitely guide you with getting back to feeling like yourself again.

*Message to the reader:*

You've come a long way, mama. You provided your baby with something that will last a lifetime. You gave a lot throughout your time breastfeeding and although your journey is coming to an end it doesn't take away from any of that. You've done an amazing job!! Sending you positive vibrations for the next stage of motherhood.

Sincerely,

*Trina, A Fellow Lactating Mama*

This information is not intended as medical advice. Please use the information provided to guide you as you journey through weaning your breastfeeding baby.