

Breastfeeding and Working



Congratulations on breastfeeding your baby! Your baby gets important health benefits from breastfeeding, and you can keep giving your baby breast milk when you go back to work. Continuing to breastfeed can keep your baby healthy so that you miss less work.

What can I do to make going back to work easier?

There are several things that you might do as you prepare to return to work to make breastfeeding easier: It might help to work part-time hours for a short time before going back to work full-time. It also can help if you are able to work from home for some of your work hours. Check to see if there are hours that you could bring your baby to work. Go back to work on a Thursday or Friday so that you and your baby will have a few days to adjust before you start a full work week. If you can find a babysitter who is close to your job, you can nurse your baby during your lunch break.

Gather together everything that you need for pumping your breasts and storing breast milk before you go to work. Pack your bag and the supplies that you will need to pump, as well as the baby's bag. You can also thaw the amount of breast milk you will need for the next day by putting it in the refrigerator the night before. Lay out clothes for you and your baby the night before so you have extra time in the morning to nurse your baby before going to work.

How can I prepare for breastfeeding at work during my pregnancy?

Begin talking to your supervisor about your plan to breastfeed before you have your baby. Find out if your workplace has a program to help support breastfeeding moms. If not, talk to them about creating such a program. Get tips from other women in your company who have successfully breastfed after they returned to work. It might help to remind your supervisor that you will miss less days of work due to a sick child and have less health care costs if you keep breastfeeding. Most employers are happy to support you if they know what you need.

How can I prepare for breastfeeding at work during my maternity leave?

Your most important goal after the baby is born is to have enough breast milk. Feed your baby at least 8 to 12 times a day. After you have a good supply of breast milk for your baby, start pumping milk at least once a day at about the same time each day. This will help increase your milk supply and give you extra breast milk in the freezer for other times when you want to give your baby a bottle. Pump after the feeding when you usually have the most milk. Don't worry if you get little or no milk at first. Your breasts will make more milk over time as you continue to pump. Begin introducing a bottle to your baby shortly before you return to work.

What should I look for in a breast pump?

A high-quality double-sided electric breast pump is the best type of breast pump for working mothers. You will be able to pump both breasts in 10 to 15 minutes. You can buy or rent your pump. The cost will be low compared to the cost of formula. Your local office for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), health department, hospital, or health care provider can help you find out where to buy or rent a pump. Check with your health insurance because many are beginning to pay for breast pumps if you have a prescription from your health care provider.



What do I need at work to be able to pump breast milk while I am there?

You will need:

- A private area with an electrical outlet where you can pump your milk or feed your baby comfortably and safely.
- Flexible breaks to pump your milk. Be specific with your supervisor about how many breaks and the amount of time you will need.
- A refrigerator or cooler to store the milk.
- A sink to wash parts of the breast pump after you use it.
- A place to store the breast pump while you are working.

How often do I need to pump while I am at work?

Plan to pump when your baby would normally breastfeed. This is usually every 2 to 3 hours. Ideally you will pump about 3 times during an 8-hour day. Pumping this many times will allow you to store enough breast milk to replace what your baby ingests while you are gone. If you cannot take enough breaks to pump every 3 hours, you can still produce a good milk supply by just pumping during your lunch break. In this case, your baby's care provider may have to give your baby some formula during the day.

How do I store my milk?

You will need a cold place to store your milk. A refrigerator or small cooler will work. Some breast pumps come with a container and freezer bag that will keep the milk that you pump while at work cold during your commute home. Be sure to label your milk with your name and the date that you collected it, especially if you are storing it in a refrigerator that other workers also use. You must store your milk safely in order to keep it safe for your baby.

Room Temperature (up to 77°C)	Refrigerator: Back of Main Body (39°C)	Freezer with Separate Door (0°C)	Upright or Chest-High Freezer (-4°C)	Thawed from Frozen Before Refrigeration
Use within 6-8 hours	Use within 5 days	Use within 3-6 months	Use within 6-12 months	Use within 24 hours

For More Information

US Department of Health and Human Services

General information on going back to work while breastfeeding

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/government-in-action/business-case-for-breastfeeding/#employeesGuide>

WebMD

How to choose and use a breast pump

<http://www.webmd.com/parenting/baby/breastfeeding-9/breast-pump?page=3>

Center for Disease Control

How to properly store your milk

http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm

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