

BREASTFEEDING AND WORK



Adapted from “Breastfeeding and Work—A Manual for Working Mothers” by BEST START, Kentucky.
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Take Time for You and Your Baby

- ❖ When you have a new family member, many areas in your life will change. Learning to breastfeed and work is just one of those changes. Once a routine is set up, it will get easier. Don't be too hard on yourself—give yourself and your family time to settle in to your new life.
- ❖ Give yourself time to rest. Consider a nap when you get home. Get other family members or friends to make meals, clean house, or do laundry. Cut down on your activities and things that do not need to get done.
- ❖ Make breastfeeding a top priority. Realize that breastfeeding your baby right now is important. Your baby is only a baby for a little while!
- ❖ If you have questions or problems with breastfeeding or for support, call your local WIC office, a certified lactation consultant, or the La Leche League (1-800-LA-LECHE).

Planning During Your Pregnancy

While you are pregnant, take time to learn about your employer's policies about maternity leave and about breastfeeding after you return to work.



- ❖ Ask for information about your employer's maternity leave policies—how long you can be out, with or without pay, after the baby is born. The older the baby is when you return, the less often you will need to express your milk during the day. Learn if you can come back at first on a part-time or flex-time schedule, or if there is a job-sharing plan. This way you don't have to work as many hours at first and can gradually get used to being away from your baby.
 - ❖ See if your employer has a policy about breastfeeding babies or expressing breastmilk during the workday. This policy should provide flexible time during the day for breastfeeding your baby and/or expressing your milk.
 - ❖ If your employer does not have a policy which supports and encourages breastfeeding, talk with your employer about the long-term benefits of breastfeeding to the company. These benefits include: reduced staff turnover and loss of skilled workers after childbirth; reduced sick time and personal leave for breastfeeding women because their infants are sick less often; lower health care costs for healthier, breastfed infants; higher job productivity, employee satisfaction, and morale; added recruitment incentive for women; and enhanced reputation as a "family-friendly" employer.
 - ❖ Talk to other breastfeeding moms, who are employed, to see what they did. Consider attending a support group at work or outside of work.
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- ❖ Look at your current job and see how breastfeeding can fit in. Look for times in your current schedule that could be used for breastfeeding your baby or expressing your breastmilk such as breaktime and lunchtime. See if your employer will let you come to work earlier or leave later so that you can have longer breaks during the day. If the baby will be cared for at an on-site or nearby child care provider, you may be able to go to the child care provider to breastfeed your baby during the workday. If your baby is being cared for by a private babysitter or family member, that person may be able to bring your baby to you during your lunchtime and/or breaktime.
 - ❖ If you cannot be with your baby during lunchtime or breaktime, find a place at work to express your breastmilk. You will want a private, quiet, clean location that has an electrical outlet and a comfortable chair. This could be a private office, women's lounge, health service office, or athletic facility. A nearby sink is very useful. You will also need to plan a way to store your milk so it is kept at a cool temperature. See the pamphlet ***Breastfeeding Basics—Collecting and Storing Milk*** for more information on this subject.
 - ❖ If you are unable to arrange breastfeeding or pumping during the workday, you can breastfeed and pump as much as possible when you are with your baby. When your baby is with the child care provider, your baby can be fed expressed breastmilk or infant formula (artificial baby milk).

During Your Maternity Leave

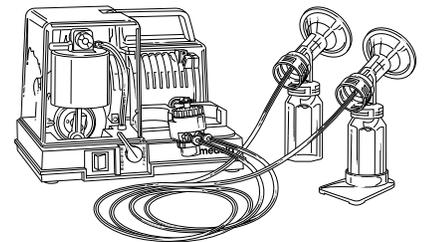
- ❖ Give yourself time to get to know your baby, yourself, and how breastfeeding works. The more comfortable you feel with breastfeeding, the easier it will be once you return to work. It usually takes about 4 to 6 weeks to establish a good milk supply and to feel confident about breastfeeding.
- ❖ Breastfeeding is natural, but it may take a little while to feel confident about it. If you have problems or questions, contact a breastfeeding educator for help immediately. Almost all problems can be solved with know-how and patience. **Don't give up!** Be patient about learning this new skill.
- ❖ About 2 to 3 weeks before returning to work, begin to let your baby get used to drinking from a bottle. You can do this by occasionally having someone else give your baby a bottle of expressed breastmilk. Babies will usually accept a bottle more readily from someone other than the mother. It is best to use a wide-base nipple. This type of nipple makes the baby open his/her mouth wide as he/she does when breastfeeding. An older baby could be given breastmilk directly from a cup instead of from a bottle. Express your breastmilk every time the baby takes breastmilk from a bottle or cup, so you can keep up your milk supply.
- ❖ Keep track of the times your baby usually wants to breastfeed, so that you can try to express breastmilk or breastfeed around those same times once you've gone back to work. This will keep you more comfortable by keeping your breasts from feeling too full or leaking.
- ❖ Find a child care provider who will support your plans for breastfeeding. Visit the child care provider and leave the baby there for some short periods of time. Gradually increase the amount of time you leave your baby with the child care provider. This lets you, the child care provider, and the baby get to know each other. Tell your child care provider your baby's usual feeding times so the baby can be fed at those times. Often, the feedings go more smoothly if the child care provider knows the baby's feeding times and offers the baby a bottle before he/she is very hungry.



Selecting a Breast Pump

Investing in a comfortable, efficient breast pump is well worth the initial cost. Ask your breastfeeding educator for help in selecting and finding a pump that will best meet your needs.

- ❖ If you are full-time employee who is breastfeeding a baby under 6 months of age, a **full-size** electric pump is the most efficient pump and the best investment. Milk can be expressed from both breasts at the same time in a total of about 15 minutes. This type of pump can be rented from hospitals, lactation consultants, or medical equipment suppliers. Some mothers share the use and cost of renting a pump to make it more affordable. Another good choice is a **mid-size** electric pump that can double pump and comes in an attractive carrying case.
- ❖ **Small, battery-operated** pumps are less expensive and can be easily carried from one place to another, but are not as efficient as the full-size or mid-size electric pumps. These smaller pumps only pump one side at a time (unless you buy two pumps), so they take a little longer to use. Suction may not be as good and batteries must be replaced often. These pumps may be more suitable for a breastfeeding woman who is a part-time employee.
- ❖ **Manual** pumps come in many different designs. They will only pump one side at a time, and will take about 15 minutes for each side. Some moms purchase two “one-handed” pumps and use them both at the same time.
- ❖ You can also learn to **hand-express** your milk without using a pump. Some women are able to express as much milk by hand as they can by using a pump.



Returning to Work

- ❖ If you will not be able to breastfeed your baby during the workday, you should plan to express your milk. You should express your breastmilk a little while after you feed your baby in the morning and during the workday at breaktime and/or lunchtime. Many moms notice that they get the greatest amount of expressed milk in the mornings. Some moms express one breast while nursing the baby on the other. This takes advantage of “let-down.” Store the breastmilk you express in glass or polyethylene bottles. Talk to a breastfeeding educator about how much milk you will need to have for your baby when you are away from him/her.
- ❖ Try to start back to work mid-week or late in the week. Keep a light schedule or work shorter hours, if possible. This can help you feel less tired and worry less about being away from your baby.
- ❖ Get up a little earlier so you can breastfeed the baby. Then the baby will be happy while you get yourself ready for the day. Nurse again just before you leave home or when dropping the baby off at the child care provider.
- ❖ Express your breastmilk at least 3 times a day—mid-morning, lunchtime, and mid-afternoon. Have pictures of your baby, a baby blanket, or toy to remind you about your baby. This can help you relax and make it easier for you to express milk.
- ❖ Wear two-piece outfits to make expressing or nursing easier. If you leak milk, try to express more often and use nursing pads inside your bra. If leaking is a problem, you can wear clothing with a pattern, a sweater, or a jacket to hide any leak marks.
- ❖ Plan on nursing when you pick the baby up from the child care provider or as soon as you get home. Relaxing together for the first 30 minutes can refresh you and give you some quiet time with your baby.
- ❖ Breastfeed when you're with the baby—mornings, evenings, and weekends. This will help keep up your milk supply. Try not to use bottles or pacifiers when you are with your baby.
- ❖ When your baby is over 6 months old and starts eating solid foods, you may not need to express milk as often during the workday.
- ❖ Your baby may awaken more frequently at night to nurse. This is a way your baby can keep up your milk supply and also “touch base” with you when you've been away during the day.

