



Breastfeeding After Returning To Work or School

You have given your baby the healthiest start in life possible through breastfeeding. Now that you are planning to return to work or school, breastfeeding doesn't have to end. You can continue to help your baby stay healthy and enjoy the closeness breastfeeding brings.

Know your options

- ⌘ Breastmilk can be expressed and stored for later use. Breastmilk keeps for many months in a deep freeze.
- ⌘ Some mothers choose to pump or hand express their milk so their babies can continue to receive their milk throughout the day. Breast pumps can be purchased and rented from many places. If you qualify for Medicaid or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) Program, you may be eligible to receive a breast pump for working moms.
- ⌘ Some mothers choose to provide formula while they are away from their babies and breastfeed when they are together. Some breastmilk is better than no breastmilk.

Talk with your employer

Let your employer or school official know how important it is for you to continue to provide your baby with your milk. Discuss your needs for:

- a private and clean place to express your milk, preferably with an electrical outlet (a restroom is not clean or private!)
- a place to store your pumped milk
- flexible breaks (at least two 15-20 minute breaks each day)
- positive support from those around you. After all, everyone benefits when your baby is healthier.

Preparing to return to work or school

- ⌘ Consider returning gradually to allow yourself time to adjust to a working and breastfeeding schedule. For instance, consider starting on a Thursday or returning part-time. Be sure to discuss your options with your employer.
- ⌘ Take a "walk through" in advance to visualize where you will be pumping, where electrical outlets are, how you will wash your hands, where you will store the milk, etc.
- ⌘ Select a caring childcare provider who is supportive of breastfeeding and has cared for other breastfed children. Consider finding someone close to your work or school so you will be close to baby and available to breastfeed during the lunch hour.
- ⌘ Obtain a breast pump about two weeks before returning to work or school and use this time to practice expressing milk once a day. The milk you express can be saved to give to your childcare provider.

Tips for effective pumping

- ⌘ Pumping takes practice! You may express only small amounts at first. Remember baby is always able to get more milk than the pump.
- ⌘ Select a time of day when you are usually more full (such as first thing in the morning). Some mothers find that pumping on one side while baby nurses on the other can be a good way to get used to pumping.
- ⌘ Find a comfortable place and use relaxation techniques before expressing. Sometimes thinking about your baby, holding baby's blanket or looking at baby's picture can help you relax.
- ⌘ Label the containers of your milk with baby's name and date you collected the milk. Check with your childcare provider on the center's breastmilk storage policy. You may wish to provide milk that you expressed yesterday for today's feedings at the childcare center.

Now that you're back at work or school...

- ⌘ Try to breastfeed exclusively first before offering supplements. This will help you maintain a good milk supply.
- ⌘ Eat healthy foods and get plenty of rest so you will feel better.
- ⌘ Consider nursing baby more often when you are home, especially during weekends. This will help you maintain your milk supply and keep baby close.
- ⌘ Call for help if breastfeeding is not going well.