

How to Continue Breastfeeding when You Go Back to Work

A Guide for Working Mothers



Workplace support for nonexempt, hourly nursing mothers is now required by federal law. Many employers today now offer workplace lactation programs or practices to help working mothers continue to breastfeed their babies. They know that the longer lactation continues, the more mothers and babies benefit—and that's good for working families and for businesses.

With the help of **Corporate Voices' workplace lactation toolkit**, you can continue nursing your baby as long as you wish. Here's how:

Ask your supervisor about how your company supports nursing mothers at work, or use the toolkit, available online, which provides working mothers with workplace support materials and resources.

Remember:

The more your baby nurses and the more you pump, the more breast milk your body makes!

Talk to your supervisor before you go on maternity leave, so you can plan for a schedule when you return with two to three breaks to pump your milk during each eight-hour work period. Each break will require 15 to 20 minutes to pump, and then clean and store your supplies.

Make arrangements to rent or buy a portable electric breast pump (if your employer does not provide an on-site pump), pump supplies and breast-milk storage containers.

Before returning to work, practice using your pump so that you are comfortable and able to collect several ounces of milk with each use. Save the milk from these practice sessions in your freezer to become your back-up supply.

After returning to work, pump and save your milk each day during the time you are not with your baby. This fresh milk will feed your baby the following day. Breastfeed when you are with your baby.

Starting to Breastfeed: Tips for New Mothers

Take Care of Yourself

- As soon as you are home from the hospital, lie down and rest with your baby nearby. Give yourself time to recover and don't try to do too much too soon. Take a nap every day. Sleep when your baby sleeps. Enjoy your visitors, but don't encourage them to come often or stay too long. You need to get all the rest you can in the first two weeks.

- Drink plenty fluids. Drink a glass of water and have a snack while your baby breastfeeds.
- Eat healthy, well-balanced and regular meals, just as you did during pregnancy.
- Avoid alcohol and limit caffeine. Remember that what you eat may affect both you and your baby.
- Don't smoke! And don't let anyone else smoke around your baby, either.
- Check with your health care professional before taking any medicine or herbal supplement, even non-prescription remedies for headaches or colds.
- Ask for help when you need it. Breastfeeding is a learned skill for mothers and babies, and an experienced teacher can make all the difference. Your teacher can be a friend who successfully nursed her baby, a WIC counselor, a lactation consultant at your doctor's office, or even a co-worker who nursed her baby after returning to work.

Tips for successful breastfeeding are available in 21 languages on line: www.abbottnutrition.com/breastfeeding

Build Your Milk Supply Before Returning to Work

- Nurse early and often. Put your baby to the breast for the first time as soon after giving birth as possible. Then nurse as often as you can to bring in mature milk and to build your milk supply. You will know your milk has come in when your breasts feel firm and full, between the second and fourth day, and you see white drops come out of your nipple or your baby's mouth.
- Expect your baby to want to nurse at least 8 times or more every 24 hours. Some feedings will be a couple of hours apart but often newborns will want to nurse more frequently. A feeding may last 10 to 60 minutes in these first two weeks. Gradually feedings become shorter and farther apart.
- Nurse at night and during the day to build your milk supply.

Avoid Sore Nipples

- Your nipples may be tender in the first week. Minimize soreness until it is gone by:
- Wait for your baby to open her mouth wide before putting her to the breast. You want her to have as much of the nipple and the surrounding areola in her mouth as possible to avoid pinching or pulling on the nipple. Her nose, cheek and chin should all touch the breast. Good positioning makes breastfeeding more comfortable for you and makes it easier for your baby to obtain as much milk as possible.
- Allow your nipples to air dry after nursing. Put a few drops of breast milk on your nipples to soothe the skin. Use pure lanolin cream, multiple-holed breast shells, or specially designed gel pads to ease discomfort and keep nipples from rubbing against your bra.
- Apply an ice pack before breastfeeding to slightly numb the nipple, causing it to protrude and making it easier for the baby to latch on.

The Keys to Successful Pumping

1. **Choose the right pump.** For most mothers who work more than four hours a day, an electric, double-sided pump (automatic or semiautomatic) is the best choice. Double-sided means you can pump both of your breasts at the same time, which lets you pump your milk in about 10 to 15 minutes. "Hospital grade" or "industrial quality" pumps are often recommended because these types of pumps are more durable and efficient. Hand pumps are generally not recommended for use at work, since it can take much longer to fully empty both breasts with one. Moms who must travel or move from place to place throughout the day may need an electric pump that also runs on rechargeable battery packs. A pump with the same "suck-and-release" pattern that your baby uses to nurse will work best at drawing out your milk in each pumping session – and maintaining your milk supply over time.

2. **Practice pumping.** To “let down” your milk when you pump, as you do when you nurse your baby, you need relax. Start by practicing at home before you return to work. Keep practicing until pumping becomes comfortable and easy. Think about or look at a picture of your baby while you pump—this can help you let down your milk. Store the milk from your practice sessions in your freezer as a back-up supply after you return to work. Follow the manufacturer’s directions in caring for your breast pump and supplies. Rinse all of the pump tubing and flange in hot water or according to the manufacturer’s directions.
3. **Pump regularly during your work hours and also consider pumping at home.** Pumping earlier in the day tends to produce more milk than later in the day. If you have a portable pump or one pump at home and another at work, consider pumping once in the early morning before your baby wakes up. Then nurse your baby. Don’t worry—there will still be milk left for your baby! Or, nurse your baby on one side and then pump the other side. If you work a morning shift and you’ve already pumped at home, you may only need to pump once more in the morning at work and once in the afternoon. If you work a shift for 8 or more hours and can’t pump at home, talk to your manager about how to schedule three (or more for longer shifts) pumping breaks at regular times throughout your shift.
4. **Pump in a private, sanitary place where you can relax.** Wash your hands before pumping. Stay hydrated, drink water before, during, and after pumping. Bring along a picture of your baby to help you relax and let down your milk. The scent of piece of clothing your baby has worn recently can be very helpful in encouraging your milk to let down while pumping. You may also wish to bring something to read or work on while you pump.

To maintain your milk supply and avoid weaning earlier than you might wish, breastfeed frequently when you are with your baby, especially at night. Keep your baby close by at night so that you can nurse easily without losing sleep. As your baby grows and begins eating solid food in addition to breast milk, you’ll gradually pump less when you are away from your baby and nurse less at night.

Federal law requires employers to provide a sanitary, private place—that is not a bathroom—for nursing mothers to pump their milk.

Corporate Voices’ workplace lactation toolkit is here to help

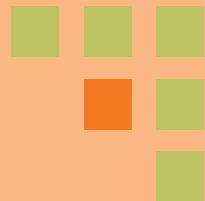
Talk to your manager or Human Resources department about help with finding and renting pumps or providing a pump for you at work. In addition, you can check with you baby’s doctor or the obstetrics department at your local hospital. Also, talk to your benefits manager--some health insurance plans cover the cost of buying or renting a breast pump. If you qualify for the government’s Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), you may be able to get a free or reduced-cost electric pump. Remember, even if you rent a pump or use a pump provided by your employer, you still need to buy the supplies (flanges, tubing and storage containers) that will fit the pump.

How to Store Your Milk Safely

Breast milk is easy to store. It can be saved fresh for several days in a refrigerator or frozen for several months before being thawed and used. When you pump at work, you can store your milk in a cooler with ice packs until you return home. Here’s how to keep and use the milk you pump:

Fresh milk

Breast milk has a slightly sweet, sometimes soapy scent and appears thinner than cow’s milk. Breast milk is usually an off-white or pale yellow color, but can vary in color depending on the time or day or what you’ve eaten. All shades are normal and generally do not change the taste or quality of the milk. Like whole cow’s milk, breast milk can separate, with the fat rising to the top. This does not mean the milk has gone bad. A quick shake of the container will mix the layers evenly. Fresh breast milk resists bacterial growth and can be kept safely at room temperature for several hours, or in a refrigerator for four to eight days. To preserve all the protective benefits of fresh milk, however, it’s best to keep it in a refrigerator or cooler (a small, insulated soft or hard-sided cooler with ice packs works well) as soon as it has been pumped.



Frozen milk

If breast milk will not be used within 8 days, it should be frozen. Freezing it in small (2 to 4 ounce) quantities makes it easier to thaw and use. Milk can be kept for 3 to 4 months in a refrigerator freezer with a separate door or up to 6 months in a deep freezer (with a constant temperature of -19C/0F). Keep breast milk in the back of the freezer, not in the front or on the door where the temperature varies. Fresh breast milk can be added to containers of frozen milk if it is first cooled.

Thawed milk

Thaw frozen breast milk by running warm water over the container. Do not thaw breast milk at room temperature. Do not bring it to the boiling point and never use a microwave to heat breast milk. Thawed milk can be refrigerated up to 24 hours and should not be refrozen.

Containers

Breast milk can be stored in:

- Glass or plastic containers with lids (containers should be freezer safe if you plan to freeze your milk)
- Plastic freezer bags designed to store breast milk (these should be clean and only used once)

Disposable bottle liners are not recommended for storing milk since the seams may burst during freezing, and the bag can leak during thawing. Don't fill your container or plastic bag completely if freezing, since liquids expand during freezing. You need to leave room at the top of the container to prevent bursting. Label each container with your baby's name and the date then breast milk was pumped.

The Keys to Maintaining Your Milk Supply

Breastfeeding is a "supply and demand" system. When milk is removed from your breast, more milk is produced by your breast. The more your baby nurses, the more milk you make. Also, the more you pump your milk, the more milk you make. If you feel that you don't have enough milk to nurse and pump, do both more frequently to increase your supply.

Here are other ways to ensure that you make all the milk your baby needs:

1. Pump regularly when you're separated from your baby, at least three times within every eight hours.
2. Nurse frequently when you're with your baby, especially at night when milk-making hormones are at higher levels.
3. Use an electric, double-sided pump.
4. Drink plenty of fluids and eat a healthy diet. During breastfeeding, you need about 500 calories a day more than you did before you became pregnant.
5. Relax and rest as much as possible. When you're with your baby, you can rest by lying down while nursing. Remember, working outside the home, caring for your baby, and continuing to breastfeed takes energy.
6. Wait until your baby is six months old before introducing solid foods, unless advised to begin earlier by your pediatrician. After your baby begins to eat solid food, you can begin to pump less at work while continuing to breastfeed at home.
7. Avoid supplementing with formula, unless advised to do so by your pediatrician. Make sure you keep your regularly scheduled visits with your baby's doctor or pediatrician, so your baby's weight gain can be checked.
8. If you feel you are not making enough milk no matter what you do, talk to your baby's doctor and ask for a referral to a certified lactation consultant in your community for help. You can also find a lactation consultant at: www.ilca.org/falc.html