



Working and breastfeeding

Step 1: Prepare your workplace

Talk with your supervisor and human resources department about your plans to breastfeed when you return to work. This will give them time to make the basic accommodations to support your decision. Explain how breastfeeding benefits not only you and your baby, but the company too.

- Children who are breastfed are ill less frequently, meaning less sick days to stay home and take care of them.
- There are decreased healthcare costs for a breastfed baby and mother.

Companies are required to provide you time and a location to pump that isn't a bathroom, so don't be afraid to ask for what you deserve. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act signed in March of 2010 is a federal law, which requires employers to provide break times and a place (other than a bathroom) to express breastmilk for the infant's first year of life. Discussing the basic pumping needs with your supervisor will help keep things positive and supportive.

- A clean and private space with an electrical outlet.
- A clean table and comfortable chair.
- Close proximity to a sink with soap and paper towels.

- About 20 to 30 minutes every three hours to pump.

Step 2: Plan ahead

There are a lot of reasons to plan ahead, but the most important one is peace of mind. Get comfortable with your pump and make sure you have enough room in your freezer before you go back to work.

Age of baby when returning to work	When to start pumping	How often	Tips
2 to 6 weeks	First three days of life.	Five times in addition to direct breastfeeding at least 8 times per 24 hours.	Massage each breast before and during pumping sessions.
6-8 weeks	2 to 4 weeks before returning to work.	After as many direct breastfeedings as possible.	
8-12 weeks	2 to 4 weeks before returning to work.	After or between as many feedings as possible.	Direct breastfeeding on non-work or school days will help maintain good production.
6 months	1 to 2 weeks before returning to work.	A few times per day.	

Introduce them to the bottle one or two weeks before

Have your partner or family member offer one bottle filled with an ounce or two of your expressed breastmilk during a feeding time when you expect to be away. This will help both baby and feeder get used to each other during feedings.

Pump in the morning

Most moms find they have the most milk in the morning hours; so after the morning feeding may be one of the best times to pump.

Store your milk

Place your collected milk in a separate compartment freezer up to six months, or in a deep freezer up to 12 months in a sealed bottle or breastmilk storage bag. Date the containers so you can make sure you're using the oldest milk first.

Breastmilk is best when you thaw it in the refrigerator the night before use, or in a container under warm running water. Don't let it thaw at room temperature. It's also important not to heat your milk on the stove or in a microwave, as this can destroy nutrients.

Step 3: Get into a routine

Try to breastfeed right before heading off to work so your baby has at least a few hours before needing the first bottle of breastmilk, and you “empty” your breasts as much as possible before your first pumping session of the day. You can also arrange with your childcare provider to avoid feeding your baby within 30 minutes of your expected return from work. That way your baby will be ready for a full feeding when you see them again.

Express milk at least every 3 hours while away

If you wait too long between pumping sessions you'll start producing less breastmilk, so make sure to pump every three hours. If your childcare is near work, try to leave during your lunch or dinner break to meet your baby instead.