

How Do I Manage Breastfeeding and Working?

Congratulations on your new baby and your decision to continue to breastfeed while working! As you get ready to return to work, consider all options that may give you some flexibility. Working and caring for an infant are both demanding activities. Many mothers typically feel fatigued and a sense of loss when leaving the baby in the care of someone else. There are several breastfeeding variations for you to consider as you return to work. Evaluate your workload and your breastfeeding goals. Your situation and your feelings may change over time. There is no right or wrong variation of breastfeeding. Do what works best for you and your baby.

Variations of Breastfeeding

- ♥ **Total Breastfeeding:** Your baby may be brought to you or you go to your baby while you work.
- ♥ **Total Breast Milk Feeding:** Breastfeeding and feeding pumped breast milk only.
- ♥ **Partial Breast Milk Feeding:** Breastfeeding, feeding pumped breast milk and using some formula.
- ♥ **Partial Breastfeeding:** Breastfeed when at home, use formula during work.
- ♥ **Reverse Cycle Feeding:** Breastfeed more in the evening and at night so less feedings (breast milk or infant formula) are needed during the day.

Plan Ahead

- ♥ Determine what facilities are available where you work. Some worksites have pumping rooms; you may be able to use the health room, ladies lounge or your own office.
- ♥ Purchase or rent a quality breast pump. Pumps that can pump both breasts simultaneously are usually the most effective pumps for removing breast milk. In addition, they help keep pumping time to a minimum. Purchase or rent the best one you can afford. Do breast pumps seem expensive? Remember that the cost of purchasing infant formula can be as much as \$1,500-\$1,800 over the course of one year. That makes almost any breast pump look economical!
- ♥ Practice with the breast pump for several weeks before your return to work. Do a trial run of a typical day at work.
- ♥ "Stockpile" milk in your freezer. Determine the amount of breast milk needed for your baby's daily feedings so you have plenty for baby while you are away.

You can roughly calculate the amount of breast milk your baby will take per feeding based upon your baby's age or weight.

Average Intake by Age

Age	Approximate Per Feeding Amount
0-2 months	2-5 oz. per feeding
2-4 months	4-6 oz. per feeding
4-6 months	5-7 oz. per feeding

Average Intake by Weight

Weight	Approximate Amount Needed over 24 hours
8 lbs.	21.3 oz.
9 lbs.	24.0 oz.
10 lbs.	26.7 oz.
11 lbs.	29.3 oz.
12 lbs.	32.0 oz.
14 lbs.	37.3 oz.
16 lbs.	42.7 oz.

Remember, this is an average estimate. Every baby is different. You may find that your baby requires a little more or a little less breast milk than suggested above. If you have any doubts, make sure to contact your baby's health care provider or a Board Certified Lactation Consultant.

- ♥ Review your wardrobe. Select clothing that buttons in the front, can be pulled up from the waist or is designed for easy access to your breast. Also, be prepared for some milk to leak from your breasts. Have breast pads handy for these situations. Wear patterned clothing, jackets, and layers to camouflage any leakage. It may also be nice to have an extra shirt at work for emergencies.
- ♥ Talk to women at your workplace about their experiences with pumping, or organize a "support group" of mothers who pump.
- ♥ Introduce a bottle to your baby between 4-6 weeks of age. There are many bottle nipples on the market that are shaped similar to a human nipple. Try to select one with a wider base, as they are generally the best for a breastfed baby. Position it in your baby's mouth so his lips cover the wide base. If your baby is reluctant, try other nipples, warm the nipple, or have someone else try. Cups are an alternative for a baby who resists the bottle.
- ♥ Select a "Breastfeeding Friendly" care-giver. You may choose one close to work or close to home. Several days before returning to work, take some time to introduce your care-giver to your baby and to review the proper handling of breast milk.
- ♥ Consider returning to work part-time or at mid-week so you can ease back into your routine slowly.

Improving Your Let-down Reflex

You may have plenty of milk, but find it difficult to let-down in your work setting. Let-down is easily conditioned by repetition, so set up a pumping ritual.

Try these tips:

- ♥ Eat and/or drink something prior to pumping
- ♥ Do shoulder exercises and neck rolls to release tension
- ♥ Apply warmth to your neck
- ♥ Use massage and apply warmth to your breasts
- ♥ Seek a private, semi-dark relaxing place
- ♥ Look at a picture of your baby
- ♥ Smell baby smells (baby powder, worn clothing or blanket)
- ♥ Listen to an audio tape of your baby or other relaxing music

Pumping at Work

- ♥ Wash your hands before beginning.
- ♥ Pump as close to your baby's feeding times as possible. The more often you can pump, the better your supply will be maintained and the more milk you will collect for your baby. If you will be working part time, one pumping session during your work day may be all you need. Returning to a full time work schedule most likely will require 2 pumping sessions, 3 sessions if possible.
- ♥ After use, disassemble your milk collection kit completely and wash it with dish soap, then allow to air dry. Some mothers find it handy to have more than one kit and just wash all the parts for each kit when you arrive home.

Storing your Breast Milk

After work, take your breast milk to your care-giver for the next day. Fresh milk is preferable to frozen, as some of the nutrients are lost in freezing.

Breast milk is easily stored for future use. Below are some guidelines for full-term, healthy babies. You will find recommendations vary widely among sources.

Storage Time for Breast Milk*	Deep Freeze Chest Freezer (0°F or Less)	Refrigerator Style Self Contained Freezer (Approx. 0°F)	Refrigerator (32°F-39°F)	Room Temperature (66°F-72°F)
Fresh Breast Milk	6+ Months	3-4 Months	8 Days	24 Hours (Colostrum) 10-12 Hours (Mature Milk)
Thawed Breast Milk	Do Not Refreeze	Do Not Refreeze	24 Hours	1 Hour

*For healthy, full-term babies. Storage times may vary for premature or sick babies.

Source: La Leche League International

Supply Problems?

It is not unusual for your supply to drop while working and pumping.

Try these suggestions to help increase your milk supply:

- ♥ Increase pumping frequency and times
- ♥ Breastfeed more often while at home
- ♥ Exclusively breastfeed on your days off
- ♥ Pump after breastfeeding
- ♥ Consider purchasing or renting a hospital grade breast pump

Traveling

You must continue to pump while you are away from your baby in order to maintain your milk supply. Pump as often as the baby is feeding, if you can. You can discard the milk, or if you can locate a freezer, you can take the milk home with you packed on ice. You may be able to get a refrigerator/ freezer in your hotel room.

Be prepared for emergencies. Carry extra batteries (for battery style pumps) and common spare pump parts for your milk collection kit. Have a manually operated pump as a back up and know how to hand express milk from your breast.

Setting Priorities

Discuss what is really important to you with your family. Some of the household tasks may done by your partner or other family members - or you may choose to hire some help. It is all right to let some tasks go. Focus on the things that are important to you and your family. Remember to set aside some personal time. It is important for new mothers to have some time that they can call their own.

Resources for Employed Breastfeeding Mothers

Nursing Mother, Working Mother: The Essential Guide for Breastfeeding and Staying Close to Your Baby After You Return to Work. Gale Pryor. Harvard Common Press 1997.

Your Baby and Your Work: Balancing Your Life. Teresa Wilson, Jane Moody. Fisher Books 1997.

Breastfeeding and the Working Mother: Diane Mason. St Martin's Press 1997.

Please remember that this is general breastfeeding information only and does not replace the advice of your health care provider. If you have a problem that you are unable to resolve quickly, seek help immediately.

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