



RETURNING TO WORK

It can be hard to think about going back to work but preparing for the transition will make it easier for both you and your baby. Before you know it, you'll both be used to your new routine.

IT GETS EASIER

There are many things you can plan and prepare yourself and your baby for the transition back to work. Just take one step at a time, be flexible, and know that it will get easier!

PREPARING YOUR MIND

- For many new moms, breastfeeding and returning to work can be hard. That's OK. It's not about being perfect; it's about taking things one day at a time. It will get easier. Don't be afraid to ask for help from **your WIC clinic**, a lactation consultant, the hospital where you gave birth, and other working moms who have successfully gone back to work and continued to breastfeed.
- Ask friends and family for support. It's all right, and even necessary, to ask for help. Who can you count on? Talk to them, tell them your plan to breastfeed, and tell them what you'll need to stick to your plan. Will you need help with dinner or childcare? Ask for it.

- Take care of yourself. Sleep as much as you can. Cut down on doing things that are not necessary. Pick a bedtime that gives you enough sleep and stick with it. On weekends, breastfeed often and sleep when your baby sleeps.
 - Take time for yourself. Too many moms take care of everyone but themselves. Take time to relax in the tub after you put the baby to bed or unwind with a favorite book or soft music. You don't have to be perfect to be a good mom. Do what you can and take one day at a time.
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PLANNING FOR WORK

- Plan to go back to work in the middle of your typical work week, if you can. For example, if you work Monday through Friday, have your first day back be on a Wednesday. The first few days are likely to be the hardest for you and your baby emotionally. You will have to balance life back at your job, pump breast milk, store your milk, and manage childcare. If you have a shorter week when you first go back, you'll have the weekend to look back at how things are going and make changes as needed.
- Plan some extra time for getting ready in the morning so you can spend some time with your baby.
- Have all your equipment ready to go. You will need your breast pump and kit, containers to store the milk you have pumped, an insulated bag, and ice packs to keep it cold (if you won't have a refrigerator you can use).
- Bring extra breast pads. If you feel a tingle in your breasts, like your milk is about to let down, and you are not ready to pump or express it, you may be able to stop any leaking by pressing on your nipples. Try wrapping your arm across your chest over both breasts and pressing down firmly, holding it until the feeling passes.
- Make a schedule. Usually, you need to pump in the middle of the morning, at lunch, and in the middle of the afternoon to replace all the breastfeeding's you would have given your baby if you were with him. If you work a longer shift, remember that you need to pump as many times as your baby eats while he is away from you.

- Try not to miss any pump times and let your employer know that this is important to you. If the schedule that you had planned isn't working, come up with a new plan together that will meet both of your needs.
- When you are with your baby and on your days off, plan to breastfeed every time your baby shows early hunger cues. If you've noticed the quantity of your milk getting less during the work week, you can increase it by breastfeeding more often when you are together. Spending time holding and enjoying your baby is your chance to build your milk supply up again.



GETTING BABY READY

- Once you have built up your milk supply, usually around the time your baby is 3 to 4 weeks old, have your partner, family member, or friend practice feeding your baby a bottle of breastmilk. This will help your baby get used to the bottle before you go back to work, and it will help you get used to pumping your breastmilk. This is a great time for you to take a walk, run an errand, or treat yourself to some time alone.
- Before you go back to work, take your baby to your childcare provider to practice your routine. Do at least one practice run where you leave your baby with a caregiver who will feed him a bottle of breast milk. Touch toys and items in the center. When you do that, your milk will build up immunities to germs in the childcare center to protect your baby.
- If possible, plan to breastfeed your baby when you drop him off at childcare and when you pick him up. Babies often want to nurse as soon as they see their mom and feeding your baby before you go home makes your trip home more comfortable.

- Remember, breastfeeding is good for a lot of reasons. When you nurse your baby after a long day apart, he will reconnect with you and feel comforted. Even if you are also using some formula, breastfeeding during the times you and your baby are together is still very important to your and your baby's relationship.
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BOTTLE ADVICE

Hold the baby upright when you feed him with a bottle. Support the base of his head so he can control the flow of milk. Stop feeding him when he needs to take a break or is full. To give him a break, tip the bottle down so milk leaves the nipple. Stop feeding when he releases the nipple or falls asleep while eating.

Never prop a bottle with a pillow to feed your baby. This is not safe and can lead to choking.

Switch the baby from one arm to the other halfway through the bottle. Look your baby in his eyes while you are feeding him.

Burp baby often since he is more likely to swallow air from a bottle nipple.



WHEN TO PUMP: PLANNING A SCHEDULE

- Don't wait until your breasts get full before pumping. As a general guideline, you'll need to pump the same number of times that you have been breastfeeding at home, or once for each feeding that your baby has while you are apart. Usually this is every two to three hours if your baby is between birth to 6 months and every three to four hours if your baby is 6 months or older.
- With a double-sided electric pump, each pumping session will take about 15 to 20 minutes. You will also need to factor in time to get to and from the milk-expression space and to wash your hands and equipment.

Typical Breastfeeding Schedule

7 A.M. Mom breastfeeds her baby just before heading to work or at childcare.

10 A.M. Mom pumps milk during a midmorning break.

12:30 A.M. Mom pumps milk during lunch.

3 P.M. Mom pumps milk during afternoon break.

5:30 P.M. Mom breastfeeds her baby at home or at childcare.

HELP—HOW DO I GET MORE MILK?

- If you normally pump for 10 minutes, go for 15 or 20 for several sessions. Even if you don't see more milk right away, the extra time will stimulate your breasts to increase production.
- Pump for 10 minutes, massage both breasts and wait a few minutes, then pump for 10 more minutes, massage both breasts and wait a few minutes, then pump for 10 more minutes.
- Pump more often. Add another pumping session, either right before you go to bed or first thing after waking up. You can also pump one breast while feeding your baby on the other.
- Sleep more. As much as possible, make sure you get a good night's rest and napping on the weekends.



JUST IN CASE: HOW TO HAND-EXPRESS YOUR MILK

Sometimes the unexpected happens. Your electric pump fails, or you leave a part of the pump at home. On days like this, you'll be glad to know how to hand-express your milk. Plus, using hand-expression along with pumping can increase the amount of milk you are able to store for your baby. Here's how:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Use a clean container with a wide opening to collect your milk.
3. Place a warm washcloth on your breasts to help your milk flow.
4. Massage your breast to help increase the amount of milk you express. Do this by placing one hand under your breast for support. Apply gentle pressure, using a circular motion with your other hand. Massage from several starting points, always working from the chest toward the nipple. Gently shaking your breasts while leaning forward can also help get your milk flowing.
5. Hold the clean container near your breast. With your other hand, place your fingers and thumb about one to two inches away from the base of your nipple. Press IN toward your ribs, SQUEEZE gently into the center of your breast, then RELAX your hand, and REPEAT. The milk will not flow quickly at first but keep going and your milk should begin to drip.
6. Alternate between the right and left breast often and rotate the placement of your fingers and thumb around your nipple to empty all areas of the breast. Expressing your milk gets easier with practice. Don't be discouraged if you can only express a small amount in the first few days.



THE BASICS OF PUMPING

WASH YOUR HANDS FIRST

Wash your hands before pumping breastmilk and then massage both breasts.

START WITH A LOW SUCTION

Pump both breasts at the same time, starting with low suction. Then increase to a comfortable suction. If you can free up one of your hands, try compressing your breasts (squeeze softly and then let go, over and over) to get more milk out. Continue until your milk flow slows to a trickle. Thoughts of your baby can make your milk flow. If you look at a picture of your baby, listen to a recording of your baby's voice, or think about nursing your baby, it can help you relax and start your milk flow.

MASSAGE

Massage your breasts again, especially in areas that feel full. Finish by hand expressing your milk into the bottle.

PUMP REGULARLY

Your breasts make more milk than you will be able to pump, but it is important to pump regularly while you are away from your baby. It will keep up your milk supply.

HOW TO STORE BREASTMILK



- Wash your hands before handling breastmilk.
- You can store breastmilk in a plastic or glass bottle with a screw-on lid or in sterile zip-seal breastmilk storage bags. You can find these in the baby section of most grocery stores.
- Label the containers with the date the milk was pumped and your baby's name. This is helpful if your baby goes to childcare where there is more than one infant or if more than one mom is pumping at work.
- Cool down the breastmilk you pump as soon as possible. You can store it in a refrigerator or in a cooler with ice packs. The milk can also be frozen if you aren't going to use it right away.
- Store breast milk in amounts that you use for a normal feeding. Since you can't re-freeze breastmilk, you may want to start by storing about 2 to 4 ounces per bottle or bag. Every ounce counts!

HOW TO USE PUMPED BREASTMILK

COLOR VARIATIONS

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- Many moms notice the breastmilk in their refrigerator looks blue, yellow, or brown and wonder if something is wrong. That is normal—the color of breastmilk can be different depending on the foods you eat.
 - It is also normal for breastmilk to separate, so that the fatty part of the milk rises to the top.
 - Gently tilt the bottle or the sealed bag back and forth, and the fat will go back into the milk. Do not shake the bag or bottle.
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CHILD CARE FACILITY SUPPORT

When you look for childcare, choose a place that will help you reach your breastfeeding goals.

When you meet with childcare staff or take a tour, make sure they understand your plan for breastfeeding. Talk about ways you can work together to give your baby the healthiest start.

Things to Ask:

They should say:

How often do you feed the babies?

Babies should be fed when they show early hunger cues, not on a feeding schedule. We will feed your baby when he shows early hunger cues.

How do you know when a baby is finished eating?

The feeding should end when the baby lets go of the nipple or falls asleep, even if there is milk left in the bottle.

How do you comfort a crying baby?

If the baby gets fussy, we try lots of ways to soothe him. Babies cry for many reasons. It doesn't always mean they are hungry. We do not automatically give a bottle when the baby is fussy. Sometimes they just need to be held, rocked,

or have their diapers changed. We also try taking babies outside when they are fussy.

Do you have a way to store pumped breastmilk?

Yes. We know that breastmilk must be stored in a refrigerator and warmed up before feeding. If we do not have a refrigerator available for you to use, we can keep the breastmilk in a cooler you give us with ice packs.

Are you familiar with how to warm breastmilk?

Of course. We warm up your milk for a few minutes by putting the bag or bottle in a cup or bowl of hot water from the tap. We never use a microwave when warming milk because it can burn the baby, and it hurts the milk's nutritional value. Breastmilk separates and leaves a layer of cream on top, so we gently swirl it to mix it up. And we know to never shake it.

Do you have a place where I can breastfeed my baby?

We have a room or space just for nursing moms. Sometimes mothers want to stay in the baby room to breastfeed and that's OK, too.

REMINDERS TO SHARE WITH CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Tell everyone who watches your baby that:

- If you are using a slow-flow bottle, it should take at least 15 minutes to feed your baby. Ask caregivers to hold baby on their laps in a sitting-up (not laying back) position so that your baby can control the flow of the milk from the bottle.
- Breastfed babies usually eat more often throughout the day and night. Your baby will probably eat every 2 to 3 hours.
- It's important to use the milk with the oldest date first. Make sure to write the date on the bottle.
- You will want to breastfeed your baby very soon after you pick him up, so baby shouldn't be fed right before you arrive. Ask caregivers to comfort him in ways besides feeding if your baby seems hungry close to the pickup time.



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