



Returning to Work

Nursing your baby after you return to work (or school) may at first seem to be more difficult than starting your baby on formula. However, continuing to feed your baby breast milk will actually make your life easier. Your baby will be healthier. You will miss less work and have fewer nights disrupted by a sick baby.

Planning Ahead

- **Establish a good milk supply** by nursing frequently during your maternity leave. Seek help to resolve any breastfeeding problems.
- **Allow a long enough maternity leave** to get comfortable with nursing. Consider changes in your work or school schedule in order to better accommodate nursing. Can you take a longer leave, return part-time, job share, or get a day care close by?
- Make arrangements for time and a place for **pumping when you return to work**. You will need a 10-15 minute break 2-3 times during an 8 hour work day. Pump in a private and comfortable place.
- **Rent or purchase a quality double electric breast pump**. Renting will cost about \$60/month, plus a pump kit for about \$35. You can purchase a pump for about \$200-\$250. If you need a pump only for occasional use, you can buy a mini-electric or manual pump for around \$50-\$120.
- **During your first week back to work, your milk supply will most likely decrease**. Before you return to work, it is best to be making more milk than your baby needs.
- **Consider building up a reserve of frozen milk** once your milk supply is established, typically after 2-3 weeks of nursing. Your supply is the highest in the morning, so pump halfway between two morning nursings and put this milk in the freezer. And don't be discouraged if you are one of those Moms who can't produce enough milk to build up a large stock pile of frozen milk. Just do your best!
- **Introduce a bottle to your baby between 3 and 4 weeks of age**. Someone besides Mom should do this. Use a slow flow nipple with a narrow base, and push the entire nipple into your baby's mouth, so that her mouth is wide open. Babies often over eat from a bottle, so take frequent breaks to give your baby time to realize she is full.
- **Schedule a trial run**. Plan an activity away from home. Pump some milk before you leave. While you're gone, a care giver will feed this to your baby. They need to be patient, because your baby may be resistant or confused by the bottle nipple. This trial

run is what will happen while you are at work or school. You will pump while away from your baby and then the care giver will feed your baby milk that you previously pumped.

- **If your baby resists taking breast milk in a bottle**, or does not want to feed much while at day care, you may compensate by nursing frequently during the evening, night and early morning. Your baby does not care when they eat, as long as they receive enough nourishment during a 24 hour time period to satisfy them.
- Teach whoever will be caring for your baby **how to handle breast milk**.

Pumping Breast Milk

- Wash hands before pumping.
- Pump as often as your work schedule allows, or as **often as your baby normally nurses**.
- If your baby is cared for away from your home, **take your baby to day care and sit down and nurse before you go to work**. That way you will not need to pump for another 2-3 hours. Likewise, when you pick your baby up at day care, sit down and nurse before you go home. This shortens the time period that your breasts must go between feeding. It also saves time and allows you to run errands or start dinner when you arrive home.
- Pump **10-15 minutes using a double pump**. Continue pumping even if milk flow decreases or stops. If you are short on time, pumping for even a few minutes is helpful.
- Do anything that helps you to **relax and let your milk down**: slow breathing, visualizing milk flowing out of your breasts, viewing a picture of your baby, massaging your breasts, thinking about your baby and not your work projects.
- When finished pumping, it is OK to just **rinse pump parts in cool water and air dry**. In the evening, wash pump parts and bottles in hot soapy water, rinse well in cool water and air dry. Another option is to bring 2 sets of pump parts to work so that you do not have to clean parts while at work.
- **See separate handout for the rules of storing pumped milk**.

While You are at Home With Your Baby

- Try to breastfeed exclusively after work and on the weekends when you are home with your baby. Nurse frequently through the evening/night/early morning as baby desires. You may find that your baby takes most of his/her nourishment when home with you. Take this as a sign that your baby prefers you.
- Your milk supply may diminish towards the end of your work week. Nursing frequently and exclusively during your days off will build your supply back up again for the following week.
- Babies go through "growth spurts" when they nurse more to increase supply. This is normal and often happens around 6 weeks of age. If you can delay returning to work until after 6 weeks, your milk supply may be more established and weather the return to work better. Babies often go through another growth spurt around 12 weeks of age.

Breastfeeding and returning to work may be very hard work. However, by the time that your baby begins solids around 6 months of age, breast milk will no longer be 100% of your baby's nourishment. In reality, your hard work will benefit your baby's health and brain development for years to come.