

BREASTFEEDING

Returning to Work or School



Enjoy the Weeks at Home

- Just enjoy being with your baby. Let go of concerns about returning to work.
- Focus on getting breastfeeding off to a good start. Learn hand expression, a useful skill.
- Plan to take as much maternity leave as possible.

Plan Your Return to Work

- Plan where you can pump and store milk at work, and how often. Get tips from other moms.
- Negotiate with your employer for break time. Both Minnesota and Federal law protect a mother's right to pump breast milk at work. Breastfed babies mean fewer sick days.
- Find a baby-friendly child care provider who knows how to support breastfeeding moms.
- Get a breast pump and learn where to get replacement parts.
- Have someone beside mom introduce the bottle, but not too early. Wait until baby has been breastfeeding well for at least three to four weeks.
- Practice pumping at least two weeks before you return to work. Practice once in the morning; store any milk obtained as recommended by breast milk storage guidelines. Don't worry if you don't get much at first.

Keep Your Milk Supply

Breastfeed when you are with your baby. Reserve bottles for when you are at work. Breastfeed often at home and at night. Keep your supply stable by nursing frequently on your days off.

If you cannot pump at work, continue breastfeeding at home. Any amount of breast milk is worth giving to your baby! Frequent breastfeeding can help keep up your supply.

Simplify Your Work Routine

Plan a happy departure and homecoming. Prepare everything the night before: what to wear, lunch, baby's bottles, pump kit, ice packs. Get to bed early and plan to wake up early. Breastfeed before you leave the house. Take advantage of any opportunities to breastfeed at daycare and again after work. Once home, relax and breastfeed before plunging into tasks. More breastfeeding, less pumping.

Simplify pumping. Plan to pump at least twice in an eight-hour work day, or about every three hours away from baby. Double pumping takes a lot less time. After pumping, just rinse pump parts and store in a zippered bag, then wash everything at home. Consider leaving a second pump kit at work.

Reduce Stress

Take time to nurture yourself. Find time for a relaxing bath, or a good book. Talk to friends. Discuss breastfeeding issues with supportive people. Find new breastfeeding friends.

Ask for support. Do not try to do everything by yourself. Talk with your family about how they can help take care of the baby ...and the chores. Organize family life so that it works for you, too.

Content developed by the Washington County Breastfeeding Coalition.

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