

breastfeeding

for **WORKING MOTHERS**
planning, preparing, & pumping

Congratulations for continuing to breastfeed your baby when you return to work! Because of your dedication, you and your child will enjoy better health for years to come, and you will be able to cherish your special breastfeeding relationship for a longer time. No matter where you work, you can find a creative solution to successfully combine breastfeeding and employment.

planning during pregnancy

The following resources can help you plan ahead for your return to work:

- **National Conference of State Legislatures**, ncsl.org (search "breastfeeding laws"), provides a summary of breastfeeding laws in the United States.
- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**, ask.hrsa.gov (search "Employees' Guide to Breastfeeding"). Download a free copy of the *Employees' Guide to Breastfeeding and Working*, which is included in *The Business Case for Breastfeeding*. *Steps to Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite* kit contains helpful information about your return to work, including a sample form letter to help you start a conversation with your employer about your breastfeeding needs.

To Do List for Pregnancy:

- ✓ Think about which breastfeeding-friendly option would suit your situation (for example, taking an extended maternity leave, telecommuting, job-sharing or flexible hours, providing childcare at or near the work site, and allowing for two or three flexible break periods)
- ✓ Talk to employer about your needs
- ✓ Your health insurance plan must cover the cost of a breast pump. Check with your plan to determine which pumps are covered and the process to obtain one
- ✓ Research childcare providers who are experienced in caring for breastfed babies

planning at home for your return to work

Breastmilk Handling Guidelines for Caregivers:

- To thaw or warm breastmilk, hold the bottle under hot tap water or place the bottle in a bowl or pan of hot water (remove pan from burner first)
- Do not use a microwave or direct heat to warm breastmilk
- Once breastmilk is warmed, use it within 2 hours to avoid bacterial growth
- Discard any milk left in the bottle after the feeding
- Ask the caregiver to hold your baby during feedings (similar to breastfeeding)
- Pace feedings by withdrawing the nipple periodically

To Do List for Maternity Leave:

- ✓ Enjoy time with your newborn
- ✓ Rent or buy an appropriate breast pump (if you are in the WIC program, ask if they provide pumps for participants)
- ✓ Practice pumping and start storing your pumped milk
- ✓ Have a family member or familiar person practice bottle feeding your baby (at 4-6 weeks, once breastfeeding is well-established)
- ✓ Meet with your childcare provider to review breastmilk handling and using a feeding log, and see if they will allow you to leave your baby there for a trial run
- ✓ Arrange for your return date at work (return mid-week and ease back into your work schedule if you can)
- ✓ Arrange your pumping space at work (you might need access to an electrical outlet and sink, and find a private location possibly with a locking door)
- ✓ Meet with a lactation consultant if you have any questions about which pump to use or any other concerns

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Parent Handout *(continued)*

returning to work

Pumping Tips:

- Massage your breasts with clean hands right before pumping to help you relax and promote milk flow and/or look at photos of your baby
- Pump with a double electric breast pump for 10 to 15 minutes at each pumping session (if you use a battery-operated pump, manual pump, or hand expression you will need to plan for a longer pumping session)
- For convenience, you can try using a hands-free pump or wearing a bra that holds the pump in place while you pump
- Use a high pumping speed until your milk lets down; as soon as your milk lets down, reduce the pump speed for the rest of the session (some pumps are designed to do this automatically and have a button that you push when your milk lets down)
- Pump at the maximum vacuum level that is comfortable for you
- Label each breastmilk storage bag or bottle with the date you expressed the milk so your caregiver uses the oldest milk first
- Store milk in 2, 4, and 6 oz quantities (a baby usually eats 3-5 oz/feeding)

To Do List for Work Days:

- ✓ Breastfeed in the morning before leaving your home and/or at the childcare provider's place
- ✓ Pack items you will need for the day, including a cooler bag, ice packs, bottles and/or bags, breast pump and accessories, breast pads, and clothes that hide leakage
- ✓ Pump during the work day to match your baby's feeding schedule (example every 2-3 hours)
- ✓ Keep your milk cool (in a refrigerator or cooler) during your work day and trip home
- ✓ Breastfeed as soon as you can after work

breastmilk storage guidelines

Storage guidelines vary, so ask your lactation consultant if you have any questions about how to store your milk. Ranges are given to account for variation in appliance temperature, the climate where you live, and the number of times the refrigerator door is opened and closed.

	Freshly Expressed Breastmilk	Thawed Breastmilk
Room Temperature	4 hours	Do not keep at room temperature
Cooler Bag (with frozen gel packs)	24 hours	Do not store in a cooler
Refrigerator	5 - 7 days	24 hours
Freezer (self-contained inside refrigerator)	3 - 6 months	Do not refreeze
Deep Freezer	6 - 12 months	Do not refreeze

- * Always store milk in the middle of refrigerator or freezer, not on the door
- * If your temperature is set to -4 °F in any sort of freezer, it can stay there for up to 12 months