

Working and Breastfeeding Made Simple

QUESTION: When I go back to work, I want to continue to breastfeed. What are my choices?

ANSWER: Think about your breastfeeding goals. The more mother's milk your baby gets, the better. But breastfeeding does not have to be all or nothing. Choices include:

- **Breastfeed.** This could mean going to your baby for feedings or having your baby brought to you. Some mothers keep their babies with them at work or use reverse cycle nursing. This means breastfeeding often at home and working during their baby's longest sleep stretch.
- **Breastfeed and leave pumped milk for all missed feedings.** Breastfeed when you are with your baby and pump your milk for all missed feedings. One thing to remember is that if you miss feedings and don't pump to make up for the missed feeding, your milk supply will decrease over time, leaving you with less breast milk to give your baby.
- **Breastfeed and leave both pumped milk and formula** for missed feedings.
- **Breastfeed and leave formula** for missed feedings.

Also think about finding a caregiver close to work rather than home. Keeping your baby close can reduce travel time, time apart, and your need to pump.

QUESTION: What do I need at work to pump and store my milk?

ANSWER: To help you get organized for going back to work, the essentials you'll want to consider are:

- **A breast pump to meet your needs.** Avoid used or borrowed mother-owned pumps, which may be worn out and unsafe to share. A double electric breast pump can make pumping go faster if you have to pump during breaks, a few times a day, many times a week (ex. working full-time). A manual pump can work well if you have longer breaks and only have to pump a few times a week (ex. working part-time).

Many women continue to successfully breastfeed and pump to provide their breast milk for their baby when they are apart.



- **A private, comfortable place to pump.** Federal laws now require this is provided by your employer if you have over 50 employees. Make sure it has an electric outlet unless you use a battery operated pump.
- **Clean place to wash your hands and pump parts.** If you are unable to wash your pump parts at work, consider having a few pump kits to use throughout the day and then wash them when you get home.
- **Time to pump.** Schedule your breaks to allow about 20 minutes for pumping and cleaning your parts. To figure out how many times you should pump at work, divide the number of hours you are away by three (include travel time).
- **Your hands.** Gently massaging your breasts before and during pumping and hand expressing afterwards has been shown to drain your breasts better and increase milk supply.
- **A hands free bra.** This is not essential but may be helpful so you can massage and help drain your breasts well.
- **A place to store you milk until you can transport it home.** This can be an insulated milk storage bag with freezer packs or a refrigerator at work. Follow the milk storage guidelines located on the *Storing and Handling Mother's Milk Q&A*.
- **A picture of your baby.** This reminder of why you are pumping can help your milk let-down or start to flow.

QUESTION: Should I pump and store my milk before I return to work?

ANSWER: In addition to breastfeeding, most mothers pump and store milk once or twice a day before returning to work. But keep in mind that once you're at work, the milk you pump one day can be left for your baby the next day. If you start pumping once a day about 3-4 weeks before going to work, you have time to practice with your pump and store a good reserve of milk. When you pump between breastfeedings at home, expect to get about half a feeding, which can be combined with breast milk you pump at other times.

QUESTION: How much milk should I leave for my baby?

ANSWER:

- If you are apart from your baby for 8-12 hours, most babies will take 10-15 oz during that time. This is about 1/3 of your baby's daily intake.
- Starting at about five weeks, most babies take 25-35 oz total (breastfeeding & pumped milk) per day. This amount stays stable until your baby is about six months of age.
- Around six months of age, your baby will start taking more solids and daily milk intake starts to go down.

AVERAGE FEEDING

Baby's Age	Average Intake Per Feeding	Average Intake Per 24 Hours
First week (after Day 4)	1-2 oz. (30-60 mL)	10-20 oz. (300-600 mL)
1-3 weeks	2-3 oz. (60-90 mL)	15-25 oz. (450-750 mL)
1-6 months	3-5 oz. (90-150 mL)	25-35 oz. (750-1050 mL)

References

Jones F. *Best Practice for Expressing, Storing and Handling Human Milk*. 3rd ed. Fort Worth, TX: HMBANA, Inc.; 2011.

Mohrbacher N. *Breastfeeding Answers Made Simple: A Guide for Helping Mothers*. Amarillo, TX: Hale Publishing, LP; 2010.

Spangler A. *Breastfeeding: A Parent's Guide*. 9th ed. Cincinnati, OH: Specialty Lithographing Co; 2010.

QUESTION: To prepare for when we are apart, when should I start giving my baby a bottle?

ANSWER: When your baby is about 4 weeks old and is breastfeeding well, you can try giving your baby some pumped milk in a bottle.

- You may need to try different nipple shapes and sizes to see what your baby likes best.
- You may need to leave the room and have someone else bottle feed your baby. Your baby expects meals from you to come from your warm, soft breast, not a bottle nipple.
- Don't be surprised if your baby takes more milk from the bottle than you are able to pump at each session. The fast and more consistent flow of the bottle can cause some babies to take more milk than they need at a feeding.
- Try a slow-flow nipple to help prevent overfeeding.
- Also try paced bottle feeding to slow your baby down, hold the bottle up when your baby is sucking and keep it level when your baby takes a pause to swallow and breathe. Just remember to burp your baby a few times during the feeding as this technique can cause them to swallow more air.

QUESTION: Once I'm back at work, how do I keep my milk production steady?

ANSWER: Try not to miss a breastfeeding or pumping session. If your baby takes a bottle, you need to make up your missed feeding session with a pumping session. Otherwise, your body will think you are trying to wean and your milk supply will start to decrease.

Breastfeed your baby before you go to work and as soon as you get home from work. Breastfeeding when you are with your baby will help keep up your milk supply. Leave the pumping for when you are apart.

This is general information and does not replace the advice of your healthcare provider. If you have a problem you cannot solve quickly, seek help right away.

Every baby is different, if in doubt, contact your physician or other healthcare provider.