

Returning to Work

Continue protecting and nourishing your baby through breastfeeding even after you return to work.

Here are 15 tips that may help with your transition back to work:

1 During your pregnancy, discuss with your employer a plan that will allow you time to express your breastmilk. Some flexibility in your work routine, which allows time to express your breastmilk in a clean, comfortable and private location, is really all that is necessary. Help your employer to understand the benefits he/she will receive when supporting breastfeeding employees. Give your boss the handouts in this packet that say "Employer's Information" at the top of the page along with the "Dear Employer" letter.

2 Explore the possibility of a gradual return to work (beginning midweek or starting back part-time or job-sharing).

3 Make a trial run a few days before you actually return to work. At this time, look at the space you will be using and make sure it has an electrical outlet if you will be using an electric breastpump. Also, make sure there is a refrigerator available for storing breastmilk and a sink for washing your hands and pump supplies. (Breastmilk can be stored in a community refrigerator such as

in a lunchroom. Label containers and/or keep in a bag). If you work on a farm, in a warehouse or other location where there is not a private place to pump, refrigeration, nor washing facilities, use whatever sanitary precautions you can, pump in your car and store breastmilk in a cooler.

4 Try to arrange childcare at or near your work. Find someone you trust who is supportive of breastfeeding to care for your child. Consider sharing childcare with another friend or family.

5 Allow at least two weeks to prepare for the time when you will be away from your baby. Express at least once a day and save your breastmilk for your care provider to give to your baby.

6 Make it clear that you do not want your care provider to feed your child right before you pick him up or before you arrive home as this is a good time to nurse him and it will help you keep a good milk supply.

7 Remind your spouse, family and other support people that they can help you relax during feedings by reducing outside distractions and by being supportive about breastfeeding.

8 Make yourself comfortable before you begin expressing your milk. Try to use some relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and thinking about your child. Sometimes it is helpful to bring your baby's picture, blanket or special toy to work to help you relax.

9 Wash your hands before expressing your breastmilk.

10 Bring an insulated container to transport the breastmilk you collect. It is important to clean your breast-pump and collection bottles after each use.

11 Try breastfeeding only and avoid bottles and formula when at home. Consider providing extra nursing time at night, days off, weekends and before and after work to help you keep a good milk supply. If you think your supply is low, nurse more frequently when home.

12 Get plenty of rest and eat healthy food. Your diet should be well balanced and include lots of fruits, vegetables, carbohydrates and fluids.

13 Consider sleeping near your baby. This helps some moms get more rest and makes night nursing easier. It is normal for babies to nurse at night. This provides valuable calories and comfort, plus it can help keep your milk supply up. Unlike taking a bottle to bed, it does not increase the risk of cavities. Putting your baby to sleep on his back and sleeping in the same room as your baby decreases the risk of SIDS.

14 Form a support group with other working women who breastfeed.

15 Remember that some breastmilk is better than no breastmilk.



“Giving Amy support and encouragement to breastfeed our children is one of the most important things I can do as a father.” Ken, father of Timothy and Lucy.



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