

Going Back to Work While Breastfeeding Checklist

During Pregnancy

- ♥ Attend prenatal and breastfeeding classes available at your hospital, workplace, WIC clinic or healthcare provider office.
- ♥ Talk with your supervisor about your plans to breastfeed.
- ♥ Find out if your employer has a lactation support program for employees and if not, ask about private areas where you can comfortably and safely express milk.
- ♥ Contact other women at your work who have breastfed after returning to work and talk to them about tips.
- ♥ Find an affordable electric breast pump - contact your health insurance, healthcare provider, hospital or WIC clinic. The Affordable Care Act now requires all insurance plans to provide breastfeeding support, including pumps.

The First Weeks

- ♥ Put your baby skin-to-skin immediately after birth and to the breast within the first hour.
- ♥ Have your baby in your room with you day and night at the hospital.
- ♥ Breastfeed at least 8-12 times every 24 hours.
- ♥ Ask the hospital for names of people you can call with questions or concerns.
- ♥ Watch for signs that your baby is getting plenty of milk - by day 5 your baby should have around 6 wet diapers and 3-4 yellow seedy stools every 24 hours.
- ♥ Avoid using bottles or pacifiers in the first 3-4 weeks as this may decrease milk supply.

During Maternity Leave

- ♥ Take as many weeks off as you can to recover from childbirth and establish breastfeeding.
- ♥ Practice expressing your milk by hand or with a quality breast pump during the day when you have the most milk. For most women this is in the morning.
- ♥ Freeze 1-2 ounces of breast milk at a time to save for your baby after your return to work.
- ♥ Offer a bottle with breast milk to your baby at least once a week before you return to work so your baby can practice using a bottle.
- ♥ Choose a childcare provider who is supportive of breastfeeding.

Returning to Work

- ♥ Meet with your supervisor to determine a place and time to express breast milk during the day.
- ♥ Some employers may be able to work with you to develop a flexible work schedule. Workplaces vary and you should talk with your supervisor to see what schedule will work for you and your employer. Some of the following *may* be options:
 - Work part-time before working full-time
 - Work from home
 - Return on a Thursday or Friday so you will have a shortened work week the first week
 - Work a split shift with a long break in the middle of the day
- ♥ Express milk during the workday when you would normally feed your baby.
- ♥ Consider using childcare close to work so you can visit and breastfeed your baby during breaks.

Sample Pumping Schedule

Example of an 8-hour work period

Pumping schedule will be different for each mother depending on work hours and nursing schedule.

Breastfeed baby before you leave for work.	
8:00 am	Begin work
9:45 - 10:00 am	Use allowed break time to express milk
12:00 noon	Take allowed lunch period to express milk
2:30 - 2:45 pm	Use allowed break to express milk
5:00 pm	Leave work
Breastfeed baby when pick them up from daycare.	

Mothers need to pump milk as often as they would nurse the baby. It is common for a working mother to express her milk about every 3-4 hours. Express breast milk before your breasts start to feel full. As the baby gets older, the pumping sessions will probably decrease in number and length of time needed.

How much breast milk will my baby eat?

Each infant is different and mothers need to rely on their own infant's feeding cues.

The following is a general guide of amount of breast milk per feeding session by age:

0-2 months	2-5 ounces per feeding session
2-4 months	4-6 ounces per feeding session
4-6 months	5-7 ounces per feeding session

The following is a general guide of amount of breast milk per feeding session by weight:

8 pounds	21.3 ounces in 24 hours
9 pounds	24.0 ounces in 24 hours
10 pounds	26.7 ounces in 24 hours
11 pounds	29.3 ounces in 24 hours
12 pounds	32.0 ounces in 24 hours
14 pounds	37.3 ounces in 24 hours
16 pounds	42.7 ounces in 24 hours

From Medela handout: Breastmilk Collection and Storage



Concerned with a low milk supply?

- ♥ Nurse more often for as long as your baby will nurse. Nursing your baby is the best way to help you make more milk.
- ♥ Pump more often at home after breastfeeding your baby and discuss pumping more often at work with your supervisor.
- ♥ Double pump—pump both breasts at the same time.
- ♥ Massage breasts, relax, and think of your baby while expressing your milk.
- ♥ Reduce stress—after work take a warm bath, listen to soothing music, and be physically active.
- ♥ Make life simpler—get help with chores at home and limit errands and extra responsibilities.
- ♥ Get more rest on weekends and during the night.
- ♥ Get help—ask a lactation consultant, healthcare provider or contact your local WIC agency for resources.