

Working and Breastfeeding



Many mothers juggle being a mom and working outside the home. Women who return to work and continue to breastfeed their babies say it is "well worth the effort" and they would "do it again with the next baby."

Mothers, babies, families and employers all benefit from breastfeeding.

Your employer can help

California law supports breastfeeding mothers who are working. Beginning January 1, 2002, employers are required to provide:

- a reasonable amount of normal break time to accommodate an employee desiring to express breastmilk, and
- make a reasonable effort to provide the employee with the use of a room or other location, other than a toilet stall, in close proximity to the employee's work area, for the employee to express milk in private.

If possible, the break time should coincide with the employee's paid break time. If not, the break time need not be paid. Employers are exempt from providing the additional break time if to do so would seriously disrupt operations. To read the actual law, go to www.assembly.ca.gov. Click on legislation, then search for AB 1025.

Talk with your employer before returning to work to arrange where and when you will be able to express milk at work. Check into the use of a vacant office or a break room, or borrowing a co-worker's office while he/she is on break. Initially, plan on 30 minute breaks about every three hours to express milk. Adjust the schedule to your individual needs.



Tips before returning to work:

- Take as long of a maternity leave as you can. The early weeks are important for bonding with your baby and building your milk supply.

- Rest, relax and focus on getting breastfeeding off to a good start.
- Establish a good milk supply by breastfeeding often. Beware of supplementing with infant formula; it may cause your body to make less milk.
- If you plan to use a bottle or cup when you and baby are separated, introduce the bottle to your baby a few weeks before you return to work. Then offer the bottle or cup every once in a while so baby learns how to drink from it.
- If your baby will not take a bottle or cup from you, have someone else give it.



- Choose a childcare provider that supports breastfeeding moms.
- Start storing expressed milk at least 2 weeks before going back to work. Store milk in small amounts, 2 to 4 ounces per bottle. Label bottles with the date collected and baby's name.
- Confirm plans with your employer on when and where you will express milk at work.
- Take a day to practice and see what returning to work will be like. Example: Get baby and yourself ready for the day, nurse, drop baby off at day care, go to work, pump during the day, pick baby up from day care, nurse, spend your evening as usual.
- If possible go back to work slowly---part time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time and then gradually going to full time.

Tips when back on the job:

- Consider making your first day back at work a Thursday. Working 2 days at first is easier than working an entire week.
- Nurse your baby before going to work.
- Pump your milk as often as you would nurse your baby. Label the container with the date and store it in a refrigerator or ice chest.
- Express breastmilk before your breasts start to feel full.
- Give your caregiver containers of expressed breastmilk to feed your baby.
- Ask your caregiver to avoid feeding baby close to the time you expect to pick up your child, so baby will be eager to breastfeed when you arrive.
- Nurse your baby when you return home, evenings, on weekends, and as often as you can whenever you are with your baby.





- Talk with other working breastfeeding mothers to share ideas and encourage each other.

Concerned with a low milk supply?

- Nurse more often. Nursing your baby is the best way to help you make more milk. Supplementing with infant formula may keep your body from making enough milk.
- Pump more often at work.
- 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. Take baby to bed with you and nurse often.
- If trying to lose weight, lose no more than 1-2 pounds a week.
- See your health care provider or lactation specialist to discuss your situation.



How long should you breastfeed?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding at least until your baby is one year of age, and as long as you wish beyond that time. Enjoy the health benefits and closeness breastfeeding brings while you breastfeed and also later in life.

Adapted with permission from the Texas Department of Health.



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