



Breastfeeding — Returning to Work

Human milk has the same important benefits for older babies as it does for infants. Just because you are returning to work does not mean you have to stop breastfeeding. You can do both! Knowing that you are providing your milk for your baby while you are away and nursing when you are home will help ease the transition back to work.

The following are different ways working women manage breastfeeding:

- Extend maternity leave so as to have more time to get breastfeeding well-established.
- Nurse your baby once or more during the work day if he is in a child care facility at your workplace or nearby.
- Work at home.
- Work part-time, feed before going to work and upon return home.
- Express milk — usually every three to four hours while you are at work for your baby to drink later from a bottle or cup.
- Breastfeed when you are with your baby. When you are away the baby receives formula or solids (if approximately 6 months of age).

Be sure to select a child care provider or center that supports breastfeeding and can safely handle the milk and feedings per your instructions. Also, engage the support of your boss, human resources staff, occupational nurse and coworkers. Assure them that pumping milk will not interfere with your work. And since studies show that breastfed infants do not get as sick as often as formula-fed infants, you may even miss fewer days of work to care for a sick baby.

If possible, go back to work on a part-time or flexible schedule at first. This can help you and your baby adjust to the new routine. If this is not possible, go back to work mid-week to make it easier for you and your baby to adjust.

At work you will need to find a quiet, private place to express milk if your company does not have a lactation room or someplace else set aside for you. An office, break room or wherever privacy can be assured can work just fine. You will need 15 to 30 minutes each time you express milk (usually twice a day). You will need access to soap and water to wash your hands before expressing. You will also need a refrigerator or a small cooler and ice packs where you can keep milk cold until you get home.

Related Articles

- [Breastfeeding — Benefits and Getting Started](#)
- [Breastfeeding — Latch-on and Let-down](#)
- [Breastfeeding — Common Concerns](#)
- [Breastfeeding — Expressing Breastmilk](#)

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

© Copyright 1999 American Academy of Pediatrics

This article is provided by Medem, Inc. All rights reserved.

