



ILCA's INSIDE TRACK

a resource for breastfeeding mothers

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Breastfeeding and Returning to Work . . . Working Out the Details

By Debra Page

Congratulations for breastfeeding when you go back to work. Women have worked and breastfed for thousands of years. Even when you are separated from your baby, it can still happen.

Your breastmilk is the only food and drink your baby needs for the first 6 months of life, according to doctors' groups and public health officials. Babies grow and develop a lot during the first year of life. Breastfeeding helps keep your baby healthy and strong. Babies can breastfeed up to—and past—their first birthday. Here are some things you can do to help you breastfeed and work.

Talk to Your Employer

- Find out how long you can stay home after your baby is born. Wait as long as you can before you go back to work.
- Ask if you can return to work part time for the first few weeks.
- Find a comfortable, clean, and private place at work where you can pump.
- Ask for 2 or 3 flexible breaks during your work day.

A lactation consultant can help you plan for returning to work and continuing to breastfeed. To locate a lactation consultant near you, go to www.ilca.org.

Save Milk for Your Baby

- Breastfeed a lot: it helps your body make a lot of milk.
- Learn how to remove extra milk (express milk) from your breasts. An electric breast pump works well. So do your 2 hands!
- Wait until your baby is about 4 weeks old before you start expressing extra milk.
- Save milk in clean containers:
 - Glass or hard plastic bottles (you'll need a lot of freezer space).
 - Special plastic bags designed for breastmilk (lay them flat to take less space in the freezer).
 - Label the container with the date you expressed the milk.
 - Use the oldest milk first.

Talk to Your Baby's Caregiver

- Give a list of instructions about storing and feeding your extra milk.
- Practice leaving your baby with the caregiver before you go back to work.

Breastmilk Storage Guidelines (For Healthy Term Babies)					
	Room Temperature (66°F-72°F)	Refrigerator (32°F-39°F)	Cooler with Frozen Ice Packs (59°F)	Refrigerator Style Freezer (66°F-72°F)	Deep Freezer (0°F)
Fresh Breastmilk	10 hours	8 days	24 hours	3-4 months	6-12 months
Thawed Breastmilk	1 hour	24 hours		Never refreeze thawed milk	Never refreeze thawed milk



- Ask how much milk the baby takes at feedings.
- Ask how the baby responds to feedings.
- Breastfeed your baby (at the caregiver's) just before you have to leave for work.
- If you want to breastfeed as soon as you pick up your baby, ask them to hold off feedings close to your pick-up time.
- Some babies may need to suck on a pacifier when mother is away.

Options for Feeding Your Baby

- Have your baby brought to your workplace for feedings.
- Go to your baby during lunch or breaks to breastfeed.
- When you pick up your baby, give the milk you expressed (pumped) to the caregiver to be used the next day.
- If you give the caregiver frozen milk, use the oldest milk first.
- When you are with your baby, breastfeed only—and do it often.

Going Back to Work

- Work only 2 days in a row for a few weeks. Go back to work at the end of a work week (Thursday or Friday) and take Wednesdays off.
- Practice pumping at your work place before you return to work.
- Pump or express your milk at about the same times your baby would have breastfed.
- Get a stretchy bra, and cut a small slit in each side. The pump flanges can slip inside to let you pump “hands-free.”
- Store your pumped milk in a refrigerator or a cooler with frozen ice packs.
- If you worry about your milk supply, talk to your lactation consultant.

RELAXING ... letting go ... letting down ... ahh.... To help your milk to flow, when you are pumping: Have a picture of your baby, listen to calm music, imagine something peaceful. Close your eyes, relax, and think about your baby. Enjoy the relaxation that comes from your hormones. This is your break and you're doing something wonderful for your baby!

Breastfeeding When You're With Your Baby

Your baby will never cease to amaze you. A healthy, full-term baby that is growing well eats when she needs or wants—and your baby likes you most of all. Your caregiver may tell you your baby does not care to drink much when you are away.

- Breastfeed whenever your baby wants, when you are together.
- Your baby may want to breastfeed more often at night.
- Your baby may breastfeed frequently to “catch up” and spend more time with you.
- You can lie down when feeding your baby to help you rest.

Network With Other Mothers

From time to time you will probably ask yourself “Why am I doing this?” Spending time with other mothers will help you stay focused on your goal.

Check out www.workandpump.com.

Or contact a support group: www.lalecheleague.org.

Breastfeeding Works While You Work!

All of your efforts are worthwhile, so hang in there. And BELIEVE: Breasts work ... babies need only breastmilk for 6 months ... and breastfeeding can continue while YOU work!