



IABLE
Institute for the Advancement
of Breastfeeding &
Lactation Education



Working and Breastfeeding

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Return to Work Recommendations for Mom

- 1) Let your employer know of your pumping needs before you return to work, and discuss different scheduling options to accommodate breastfeeding and child care such as longer lunch times in order to nurse the baby. Also, discuss possibly going back to work part time for the first 1-2 weeks, to get the hang of pumping and being away from the baby.
- 2) Find a supportive daycare who will support your efforts to continue nursing, and who is comfortable with breastmilk storage and handling. For example a supportive daycare provider will communicate with you at the end of the day if the baby is hungry but it is almost time to pick up the baby.
- 3) If the employer does not have a lactation program, share information about the Break Time for Nursing Mothers Law
- 4) Find out from the employer if any other women have pumped milk at work, in order to learn tips from other colleagues.
- 5) Take as much maternity leave as possible to recover from delivery, and to establish a strong breastfeeding routine.
- 6) Start storing 1-2 ounces of breastmilk a day approximately 1 month before returning to work. Store the milk in 2-4 ounce increments. The best time to pump for storing extra milk is after the baby's first am feeding. This is when the milk supply is highest.
- 7) Introduce a bottle to the baby before going back to work.
- 8) Plan your pumping schedule before you go back to work. Try to pump as often as the baby typically feeds at home, or every 2-3 hours for very young babies. After the baby is approximately 4 months old, the baby won't feed as often, so the number of pumpings at work usually decrease over time.
- 9) Use a good quality pump at work that will do a good job emptying the breasts in 10-15 minutes. Some employers have hospital grade pumps in lactation rooms. Otherwise, it is best to buy a good quality double electric pump, or rent one. Make sure you are comfortable using the pump before going back to work.
- 10) If the employer does not have a space designated for pumping, work with your employer or supervisor to find a private place at work. The room should be private, secure, have an electrical outlet and ideally a sink for washing hands and pump parts. The bathroom is usually not an acceptable place to express milk since it can be unsanitary, and it can be hard to operate a breast pump in a toilet stall.
- 11) Several tips to promote letdown during pumping include:
 - a. Think about the baby in order to relax. Bring a photo, an article of baby clothing or blanket, or a toy.
 - b. Try to sit and relax in a comfortable position, ideally in a place that won't be interrupted by others.
 - c. Massage the breasts and rub the nipples before pumping to promote letdown.