



**Breastfeeding
and Going Back to
Work or School?**

Going back to work or school after your baby is born can be a very emotional time for mothers and can make it seem harder to keep breastfeeding. But there are many reasons for continuing to breastfeed! By planning ahead, you can continue to connect with your baby even when you are not there. Here are some helpful tips:

Do I Need to Pump?

You do not need to pump to successfully feed your baby. Otherwise, pumping is a great help for building up a supply of milk for when you are away from your baby. Putting your baby to breast is the best way to make sure your baby gets enough milk. The amount of milk you are able to get with a pump is not a good sign of how much milk your baby gets when he nurses at your breast. Most women make more milk when they breastfeed than when they pump.

However, if you...

- are returning to work or school
- are separated from your baby for other reasons
- want someone else to feed your baby occasional bottles of pumped breastmilk or
- need to pump for medical reasons

...a good pump will help you continue to give your baby the best nutrition even when you are away.

What Kind of Pump Will I Need?

There are several types of pumps. Your health insurance will be able to provide one for you. Some pumps are better than others, so be sure to ask. Some women are able to hand express enough milk to meet their babies' needs. Your WIC nutritionist or peer counselor can give you more information about pumps or hand expression.



How Often Do I Need to Pump?

It depends on the age of your baby. A simple rule is to pump like your baby feeds. To keep up your milk supply, you should try to pump 2-3 times during an 8-hour work shift, or every two to three hours that you are away from your baby. Your WIC nutritionist or peer counselor can help you come up with a plan.

How Do I Get Started?

It's a good idea to practice pumping about once a day a couple of weeks before you and your baby have to be apart. This will help your body get used to the pump, as well as help you stock up a bit on stored breastmilk. You will probably be able to get more milk from each pumping session after a little practice. It's best to wait until your baby is about 3 weeks old to introduce a bottle of pumped breastmilk.

Wash your hands. After you start pumping, it may take several minutes for your milk to flow. Massaging your breast before and during a pumping session will help you get more milk out. To help your milk flow, try to pump in a soothing environment. If you are away from your baby, thinking about your baby and looking at pictures of her can help.

Pump until your breast feels empty and the milk stops flowing. Most electric pumps allow you to pump both breasts at the same time. Each session will take about 15 minutes. If you are using a manual pump, try to pump both sides to help keep up your milk supply and get as much milk as possible.

How Do I Store Pumped Milk?

Use hard plastic or glass containers or plastic breastmilk bags to store your milk. It's a good idea to double up the bags to prevent leaks. Fill each container with about the amount of milk your baby will drink at one feeding so that



you don't waste any breastmilk. If you freeze your milk, be sure to leave a little space at the top of the container, since the milk will expand. Label each container with the date that you pumped it. If you are sending the milk to a daycare, put your baby's name on it as well.

Remember that pumped milk will separate into layers when it is stored. This is normal and completely safe. The milk will often look like skim milk, but it can change in color and odor depending on what you eat. This is also fine for your baby.

You can safely leave pumped milk at room temperature for up to four hours, but it is best to chill it immediately after you pump if you won't be using the milk right away.

Refrigerate at a temperature of 40°F or below	Frozen (freezer door separate from refrigerator) with a temperature of 0°F or below	Thawed (from frozen) and refrigerated 40°F or below
Use within 5 days	Use within 5 months	Use within 24 hours

How Do I Defrost and Warm Chilled Milk?

You can thaw frozen milk overnight in the refrigerator. For a quicker defrost, run the container under lukewarm tap water or let the container sit in a bowl filled with warm water. Remember to use your milk within 24 hours. The warm water method is also a good way to warm refrigerated milk. Boiling or microwaving milk is not recommended because it increases the risk of burning the baby. It's also not safe to refreeze thawed milk.

Before Your Baby Arrives

- Talk to your supervisor, human resources department or school counselor about your plans to breastfeed after you return to work or school.
 - Discuss different types of schedules, such as starting back part-time or starting mid-week. This will allow you to work 2 days and then have 2 days off before starting back full-time.
 - Ask about private areas where you can pump your breastmilk 2-3 times a day. The Affordable Care Act (health care reform) supports nursing mothers who work. For more information, ask your WIC peer counselor or visit www.dol.gov/whd/nursingmothers/.
- Talk with your WIC nutritionist or peer counselor about the best pump for you. WIC or your insurance company can help you get a pump for free!

After Your Baby Arrives

- Begin pumping when your baby is about 3 weeks old.
- Offer your baby a bottle (1-2 oz) of expressed breastmilk once a day when your baby is about 1 month old to help him/her get used to the bottle. Your baby may take a bottle better from someone other than you!
- In addition to regular feedings, try to pump several times a week to build a supply of breastmilk to keep in your freezer.



Going Back to Work/School Timetable

About 2 weeks before you return to work/school:

- Follow up with your employer regarding your work and pumping schedule.
- Continue to offer your baby a bottle with your breastmilk once a day.
- Visit the sitter or daycare provider with your baby. Find out if there is a special space in the freezer/refrigerator to store breastmilk.
- Share instructions on how to thaw and handle breastmilk with the child care provider.
- Think about clothes for work that will make it easy to pump.

About a week before you return to work/school:



- Leave your baby with a family member or babysitter a couple of times before you go back to work or school to get used to the new routine.
- If you have freezer space, cook several meals in advance so you will have them ready the first week you go back work or school.

Night before:

- Pack the diaper bag, your lunch and healthy snacks, your pump and milk storage equipment.

Every morning:

- Allow 30-60 extra minutes for getting dressed, nursing your baby and packing up two people!
- Eat a healthy breakfast.
- Finish packing the diaper bag with your labeled bottles of breastmilk and some extra frozen breastmilk for the child care provider.
- If you can, breastfeed your baby at day care. Your baby will be full and your breasts will be comfortable when you arrive at work or school. This will help avoid the need to pump as soon as you get to work.

At work/school:

- Remember to wash your hands!
- Pump according to the schedule approved by your supervisor or school administrator and what works with your schedule. Pump when you would have nursed your baby, usually every 3 hours.
- Rinse pump parts and store in a resealable bag in the refrigerator or cooler bag. If you can't keep the parts cold, wash in warm, soapy water.

When you come home:

- Label, date and store your freshly pumped breastmilk in the refrigerator to use the next day or drop it off at daycare when you pick up your baby. If you have more than you need, put the milk in the freezer.
- Wash pump parts and bottles with soap and warm water.
- Sit down, nurse and relax with your baby!



Your Schedule

Time	Breastfeed/ Pump	Location (home, day care, work/school)

1-800-WIC-1007

mass.gov/wic



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