



Go Back to Work and Continue to Breastfeed? Yes, You Can!

Start Planning Now

Ask any mother working outside the home: Juggling family and job responsibilities is a daily balancing act. Mothers with brand new babies face even greater challenges. The longer you are able to stay home the better. However if you are getting ready to return to work shortly after the birth of your baby, you might be concerned about how to continue to breastfeed. Don't worry. With some advance planning, it is possible to successfully combine work and breastfeeding.

Why Continue to Breastfeed?

Health authorities such as the Surgeon General and the American Academy of Pediatrics agree that breastmilk offers superior infant nutrition. In addition, breastfed babies have significantly fewer respiratory-tract and ear infections than bottle-fed babies. Breastfeeding reduces an infant's risk of food allergy, and initial research suggests that breastfeeding may have a long-term positive effect on baby's immune system, intelligence quotient (IQ) and lower risk of obesity, reduced incidence of lymphoma, diabetes and SIDS.

For mothers, breastfeeding helps the uterus return to its pre-pregnancy state more quickly and decreases the risk of pre-menopausal breast cancer, ovarian cancer and osteoporosis. And with no formula or vitamin costs, breastfeeding is more convenient and less expensive than bottle feeding.

How Will You Combine Breastfeeding with Working?

Create Employer Awareness

Fortunately, more and more employers are realizing the critical role women play in the work force and are taking steps to make it easier for them to return to the job and continue to breastfeed.

Some progressive employers have instituted company-sponsored support for breastfeeding mothers. For example, a Corporate Lactation Program can include prenatal education and postnatal counseling provided by an on-site lactation professional. Many programs include space and equipment for women to pump their breastmilk at work. Other companies may not have a full program, but will allow women to take the time they need during the day to pump their breastmilk.

Talk with your employer or ask them to call Medela before your baby is born. You may want to extend your maternity leave, work part-time for a period, job share, or work at home part of each day or week. If your company does not have a Lactation Program, now may be the time to investigate starting one. In lieu of a formal program, however, try to make your own arrangements.

Explain to your employer the health benefits of breastfeeding for your baby. When baby is sick, mother often must be absent from work. The prospect of less absenteeism among breastfeeding mothers is a bonus for cost-conscious employers.

Select a Caregiver

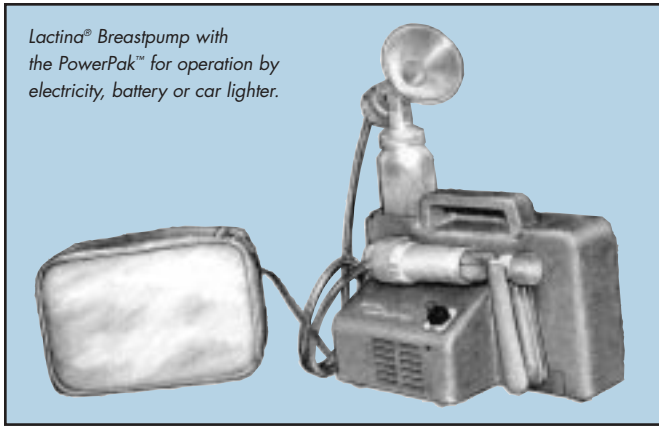
Choosing the person who will care for your baby while you are at work is an important decision. You will want to select someone who supports your commitment to breastfeeding. Don't wait until the last minute to start investigating your choices. You will need to find a primary person as well as several back-ups—just in case.

Give your caregiver explicit written instructions on how to store breastmilk. Explain that, if possible, your baby should not be fed within a couple hours of your return. That way, he or she will be ready to breastfeed as soon as you arrive at the caregiver's or at home. If baby is hungry before you arrive, the caregiver should tide him or her over with some water or a snack-sized portion of stored breastmilk.

Helpful Hints for Breastfeeding

- Take full advantage of your maternity leave to establish a good supply of milk before going back to work.
- Once your milk is well-established and your baby is nursing well (at about 4 to 6 weeks), introduce a bottle. This step prepares your baby for bottle feeding during the day while you are at work. Keep in mind that babies usually associate breastfeeding with mom. Consequently, in the beginning, some babies are more receptive to a bottle if it is offered to them from someone other than you.
- Purchase or rent a high-quality, automatic, electric breast pump. For example, Medela's Lactina® or Pump In Style® are state-of-the-art in performance, safety and convenience. They run on regular electricity or can be battery-operated. They also can be powered by a vehicle battery via a cigarette lighter connector. Other smaller pumps

Lactina® Breastpump with the PowerPak™ for operation by electricity, battery or car lighter.



may not be able to maintain your milk supply on a long term basis.

- Use a double-pumping kit with your electric breast pump. By expressing both breasts simultaneously, most mothers can complete a pumping session in just 10 to 15 minutes, which easily fits into a break period or lunch time.

Breastmilk availability works on a supply and demand basis. Maintaining a good milk supply depends on the regular stimulation provided by baby or by pumping. Double pumping increases your prolactin levels, which helps maintain milk supply. This benefit is important to working mothers who might have difficulty maintaining their milk supply because baby isn't always available for breast stimulation.

- To familiarize yourself with the process and help build up milk supply, start using your electric breastpump about one or two weeks before you return to work. Try to simulate what your pumping schedule will be at work.
- To ease your transition back to work, try to return midweek so that you have only a few days before the weekend. Plan to breastfeed at least once before you leave in the morning. If you can, go home or to your day-care facility at lunch time to breastfeed, or have your baby brought to you. If breastfeeding during the lunch hour is not possible, plan to pump two to three times during the day at work. (Remember, if you are using a double-pumping kit, that's just about 45 minutes out of your work day.)

Breastfeed as soon as you can after you return home or reach the day care facility, during the evening, before bed, and on days off as often as possible. Depending on your

baby's age and the amount of time you spend away from him or her, you might be able to reduce the number of pumping sessions at work to one or two times a day.

- If your company does not make a special room available for mothers who are breastpumping, find a spot that is as private and comfortable as possible. Bring along a picture of your baby, something to drink and perhaps a small snack. If you have difficulty letting down, take a few deep breaths, listen to some soothing music or imagine your baby nursing.
- You can store the milk you pump each day so that it is available for your baby the following day while you are at work. If a refrigerator is not available, use a cooler case. Medela offers a number of options, including a soft-sided carrying case for the Lactina Breastpump with a built-in cooler.

Human milk can be kept in the refrigerator for up to 5-7 days. If you must keep it longer than 5-7 days, label the bottles with the date and store them in a home freezer as soon as possible. Breastmilk will keep in the home freezer for up to six months or up to 12 months in a -20° C freezer. Thaw frozen milk in warm water; do not microwave or boil it.

You Can Do It!

It is typical for any new mother returning to work to feel fatigued and to experience a sense of loss over leaving her new baby in someone else's care. If you have been breastfeeding your baby, you may feel even more sadness at the prospect of having to cease a natural process that has protected your infant's health and created such a powerful, nurturing bond between you and your baby.

These kinds of reactions to stopping breastfeeding before you really want to are quite normal. The good news is that you don't have to stop. Pumping your breastmilk at work will maintain your milk supply so that you can continue to breastfeed mornings, evenings and on weekends—until you and your baby are ready to wean.

You'll need some patience to get through a period of adjustment. You'll need some practice with the pump. And of course, it helps to have an understanding employer. But the choice is yours. Return to work and continue to breastfeed. Yes, you can!

For more breastfeeding information, visit www.medela.com

To locate Medela Products or a breastfeeding specialist in your area, call 1-800-TELL YOU, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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