

## You CAN Breastfeed and Work

Lots of moms breastfeed after going back to work. Here are some of their tips for making it easier.

### During Pregnancy:

- Tell your supervisor you plan to breastfeed.
- Attend a breastfeeding class at the hospital, at a local WIC agency, La Leche League group, or in the community. Invite your partner, mother, and other support people in your family so they will know how to help.

### During Maternity Leave:

Get breastfeeding off to a good start in the first month so you'll have more options later. Here's how:

- Breastfeed exclusively before you go back to work so your body will build a strong foundation for making milk.
- Breastfeed whenever your baby shows feeding cues, or at least 8-12 times every 24 hours.
- Do not use bottles or pacifiers during the first month so baby becomes a pro at breastfeeding.
- Try to take at least 6 weeks maternity leave, if possible, so you will fully recover from childbirth and you and your baby get breastfeeding off to a good start.
- Remember: every drop of your milk is important! Be proud of any amount of breastfeeding you and your baby can enjoy.

### Before Returning to Work:

- Ask the lactation consultant or healthcare provider whether you need a breast pump, and which kind is best for you.
- Practice pumping your breast milk during the morning or other times when your breasts feel fuller.
- Remember that pumping takes practice. Don't be surprised if you only get a little the first few times. Babies are usually much better at removing milk.
- Store any milk you collect in small quantities (1-2 ounces). Baby may not take a large amount at one feeding, and your milk is too valuable to waste!

### Preparing Baby

- Wait until about 2 weeks before you go back to work to help your baby learn to drink from a bottle. Some ideas to try:
  - Only put a small amount of breast milk (around 1 oz.) in the bottle. These are practice tries right now.
  - Offer it when baby is not super hungry or upset. Some babies are more eager to try something new if they are a little sleepy.
  - Ask someone else to offer the bottle. Babies often prefer to nurse when they are with mom.
  - Don't force baby to accept a bottle. If the baby refuses, try again later.
  - Some babies prefer a cup, dropper, or spoon. Some babies "reverse cycle feed." This means they reverse the times they eat by breastfeeding more when mom is at home and may not take much when mom is away. This is normal, as long as babies get 8-12 feedings in a 24-hour period.
  - Find a breastfeeding-friendly childcare provider. Check the list of New York childcare centers that support breastfeeding moms at [www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/bfmap.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/bfmap.htm).
  - If your childcare center is not on the list, the childcare assessment at [www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/docs/cacfp-177.pdf](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/docs/cacfp-177.pdf) will help you find out if they support breastfeeding moms.

### Getting Support from Family

- Be sure to let family members know how important it is that you be supported in your decision to breastfeed.
- Share the booklet, *"Making it Work: For Family Members"* available at: [www.breastfeedingpartners.org](http://www.breastfeedingpartners.org).
- Connect with friends who are also breastfeeding to get support, or join a mother's group in your community or a Baby Cafe.

## Expressing Milk at Work

### Finding a Place to Express Milk

Some employers have a lactation room already set up. Ask first. If necessary, suggest some places. Remember: your employer cannot ask you to breastfeed in the bathroom. Laws are intended to protect you and your baby.

Try these ideas:

- Private office of the manager or another worker.
- A conference room or small room not used very often.
- A small closet or storage area converted to a lactation space.
- A partition in the corner of a room.
- A space that can be shared with other offices or stores.

### Where to Store Your Milk

■ Your milk can be stored in an insulated lunch bag, a small cooler, or in a regular refrigerator until you can take it home to your baby.

### Finding Time

- Express your milk every 2-3 hours.
- If you're using a "double" electric pump that expresses from both breasts at the same time, it may take around 20-30 minutes each time. Expressing by hand or with a manual pump will take longer. Be patient. You will get more efficient with practice.
- Use your regular breaks and meal period to express milk. If you clock in and out and find you need a little extra time, talk with your supervisor about coming in a few minutes early or staying a few minutes later to make up the time. Some moms eat their lunch or dinner while they pump.
- If you don't have a coworker who can cover for you while you are taking a break to express your milk, ask if you can post an "I'll Be Back Later" sign while you'll be away.

### Special Tip to Try: How Often to Pump

- Count the number of times your baby usually breastfeeds every 24 hours. This is your "magic" number to keep steady once you return to work.
- For example, if your baby usually breastfeeds 10 times every 24 hours, you will need to either breastfeed or express your milk a total of 10 times every 24 hours once you are back at work.
- This might mean you breastfeed 6 times and express milk 4 times for a total of 10, or once every 2 hours or so. Keeping your magic number steady will ensure your milk production stays high even when you are away from your baby.

### Special Tip to Try: Finding a Connection

Many mothers find that their milk flows easier when they are able to feel close to their baby while they are away.

- Bring something with the baby's smell on it, such as a soft baby blanket or a baby shirt.
- Record your baby's noises on your phone.
- Look at photos of your baby (prints or photos on your phone).

Ref: NYSDOH "Making it work for Moms".

For more breastfeeding information, visit: [www.breastfeedingpartners.org](http://www.breastfeedingpartners.org)