



# Breastfeeding & Returning to Work

**Congratulations!** You have been giving your baby the best start in life by breastfeeding. It's time to learn how to provide your milk for your baby while you are away. You may be worried about leaving your new baby, while wondering if you can continue breastfeeding. Many mothers continue to breastfeed after they return to work. You can too!

## Getting Ready

- After having your baby, take as many weeks off work as you can.
- Breastfeed often to build up a good milk supply.
- Practice expressing your milk by hand or with a quality breast pump. Freeze a few servings to be given to your baby after you return to work.
- Shortly before returning to work, help your baby adjust to taking human milk from a bottle. Your baby may take a bottle more easily from someone other than you.
- Talk with your family and let them know you are counting on them for support.





# Planning Ahead by Talking to Your Employer

- **Schedule a time to talk with your employer.**
- **Before you meet, practice what you are going to say.**
- **At your appointment:**
  - **Explain why breastfeeding is important to you.**
  - **Explain that a healthier baby will make you a more reliable employee.**
  - **Refer your employer to the Oklahoma State Department of Health Breastfeeding website at <http://bis.health.ok.gov> for resources on working and breastfeeding.**
  - **Talk about your desire to either breastfeed your baby or pump onsite.**
  - **Have a plan ready that includes how often you will need to pump or breastfeed your baby onsite. Offer to come in early or stay late to make up the time.**
  - **Ask about using a private place, other than a bathroom, to pump or breastfeed.**
    - **If using a cubicle, a shower curtain rod or wooden dowel can be used to hang a large curtain for privacy.**
    - **If using an office where the door doesn't lock, hang a sign outside the door when pumping or breastfeeding.**
  - **Share your plan to store your milk.**
    - **An insulated bag with ice packs can be used to store fresh milk up to 24 hours.**
    - **It is safe to store human milk in a shared staff refrigerator.**

## Childcare

- One of your most important decisions will be choosing someone to care for your baby while you are at work.
- Try to find someone that is close to your work and supports breastfeeding.
- A relative or friend may be willing to bring the baby to you for feeding, at least during your lunch break.
- Visit your childcare with your baby a few times before beginning work.
- It may be helpful to go through at least one practice run of leaving your baby with the caregiver for several hours or the length of your workday.



# Back at Work

- Starting work mid-week may help you and baby adjust.
- Breastfeed before leaving home, at the childcare center, and after work.
- Pack items you will need throughout the day, including a cooler bag, ice packs, bottles, breast pump and accessories.
- Pack nutritious food and drinks to help you maintain your energy.
- Keep extra breast pads available in case you experience leaking.



## Tips for Pumping:

- Try to keep a routine. Skipping or postponing pumping may affect your milk supply.
- The more you pump, the more milk you make. Make pumping regularly a priority.
- If you have a long drive before you see your baby, try adding another pumping session before leaving work.
- Always wash hands with soap and water before touching breasts and breastpump parts.
- Follow directions that come with your pump for cleaning, assembly, and directions for use.
- Set an alarm to remind you when to pump during the day.
- Try to relax! Some moms listen to music, read, or look at a picture of their baby while they pump.
- Massage your breasts while pumping; this can also increase your milk supply.
- Make sure the breast flange fits you correctly. Breast flanges that do not fit correctly can decrease the amount of milk expressed.
- Wash the pump parts after each use in hot, soapy water or use microwavable cleaning bags, so parts are ready for the next pumping session.
- Don't wait until your breasts get full to pump. Express every 2-3 hours if your baby is 0-6 months and every 3-4 hours if your baby is 6 months or older. Check out these sample pumping schedules to give you some ideas:

0-6 Months Sample Pumping Schedule		
Before Work	7 a.m.	Breastfeed
Break	10 a.m.	Pump
Lunch	12:30 p.m.	Pump
Break	3 p.m.	Pump
After work	5:30 p.m.	Breastfeed

6-12 Months Sample Pumping Schedule		
Before Work	7 a.m.	Breastfeed
Lunch	11 a.m.	Pump
Break	3 p.m.	Pump
After work	5:30 p.m.	Breastfeed

# How to Store Human Milk:

- Store in clean containers, such as screw cap bottles or bags designed to store human milk. Avoid using ordinary plastic storage bags that could easily leak or spill.
- Store about 2 to 5 ounces of milk per bottle or bag for the first six months.
- Use the oldest milk first.
- Label each container with the date, so you know how long the milk will last.
- At work, store your milk in a cooler with ice packs or in the company refrigerator.
- Throw away any unused milk that is left in the bottle after a feeding.

# How to Use Frozen Human Milk:

- Thaw milk slowly in the refrigerator, and use within 24 hours.
- Never microwave human milk.
- To quickly thaw milk, hold the container under warm running water.
- Warm milk by putting in a bowl of hot water.
- Do not refreeze milk that has been thawed.
- Gently swirl the milk to mix the creamy and watery parts together.

Human Milk Storage Guidelines for Healthy, Full-Term Babies		
Location	Best used within	Storage Temperature
Countertop	4 hours	Room Temperature must not be higher than 77°F (25°C).
Refrigerator	4 days	At or below 40°F (4°C)
Freezer with separate door	6 months	At or below 0°F (-18°C)
Deep freezer	12 months	Below -4°F (-20°C)

