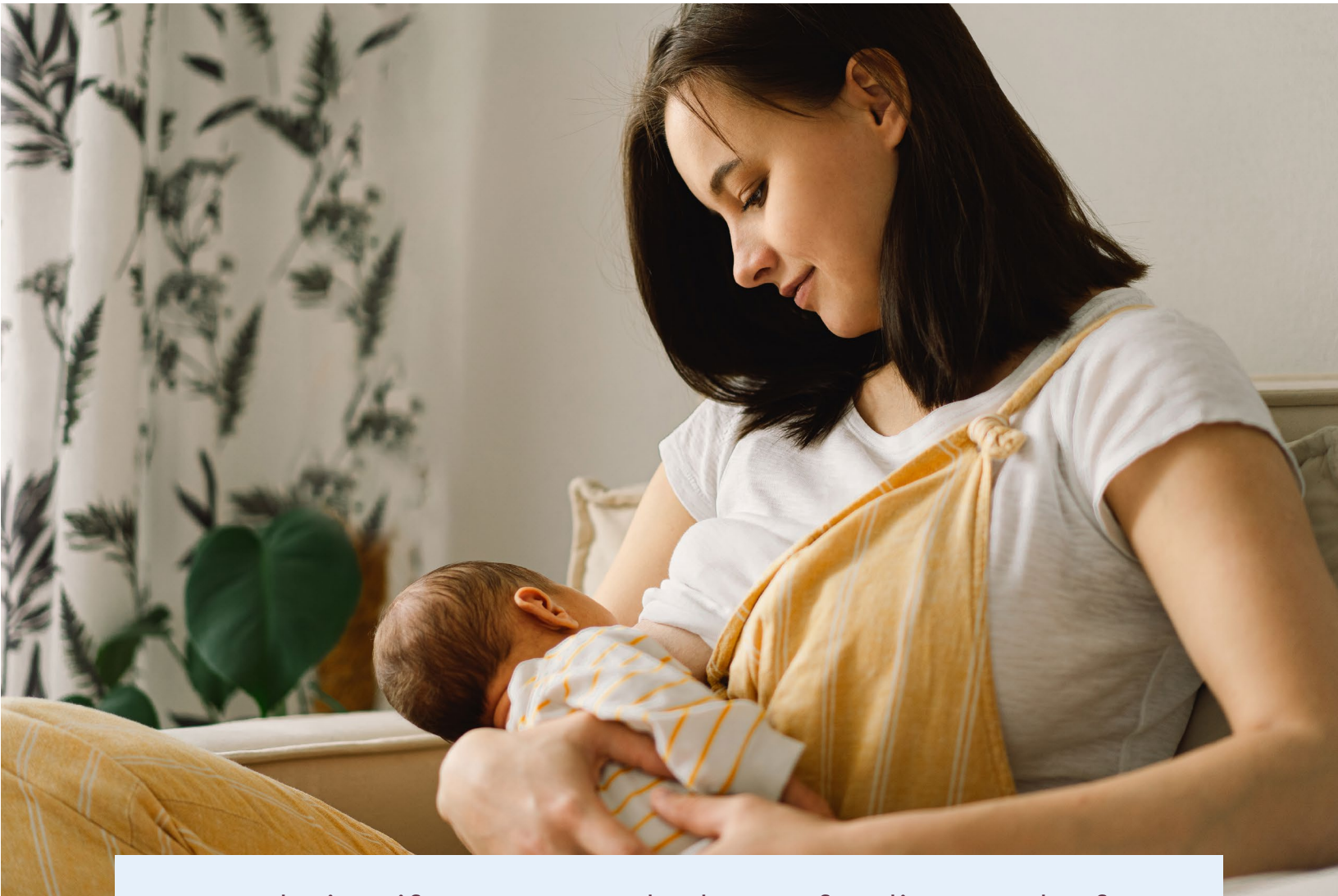


SELF-PACED LESSON

After reading this lesson, click the survey link at the end to answer a few questions and receive nutrition education credit.

Breastfeeding and Returning to Work



Wondering if you can make breastfeeding work after returning to work?

SELF-PACED LESSON

Breastfed babies are healthier, resulting in less worry, less time off work to care for a sick child and lower health care costs. Continuing to breastfeed when returning to work is possible and WIC is here to help you!

WIC has a breast pump program to help breastfeeding moms who will be separated from their babies for any reason, including returning to work.

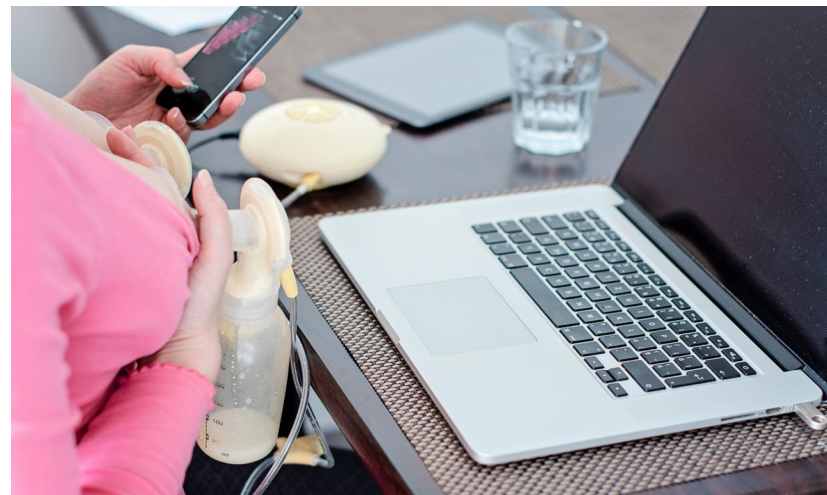
Let's talk more about how you can prepare to return to work while breastfeeding your little one.

Did you know there are laws that protect employees' right to express breast milk?

National Law 2010 - Break Time for Nursing Mothers states, "Employers shall provide reasonable break time and a private place for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for one year." Additional breastfeeding laws and information can be found here: <https://www.oklahoma.gov/health/breastfeeding>.

What are some ways I can talk to my employer about pumping and/or feeding my baby during the workday?

Scheduling a time to talk to your employer about your plan to pump while at work can help decrease stress. Talk about why breastfeeding is important to you and explain that a healthier baby will mean less time off work. Get a plan ready to explain how often you will need to pump or feed your baby during your workday. Ask your



employer about a private place, with an electrical outlet, where you can pump.

When is it recommended to begin pumping and storing breast milk before going back to work?

It can be helpful to begin pumping two weeks before you return to work. Always try to breastfeed baby first before pumping at home. Keep in mind, it may take several pumping sessions to get enough milk for one feeding. Pumping and storing your breast milk during this two-week window should ensure your baby has enough breast milk on your first day back to work. When you do return to work, you should get more milk when pumping because your baby will not be removing milk immediately beforehand.

Helpful Tip: *Your baby is able to get more milk from the breast than a pump. Continue to breastfeed your baby at the breast when you are together. This is a great way to maintain your milk supply and bond with your baby after being apart.*



SELF-PACED LESSON

How often is it recommended to pump while at work?

It is recommended that you nurse or pump at least three times in eight hours. A typical schedule could look like the following:

7:00 am Feed your baby at the breast before leaving for work.

10:00 am (Break #1) Pump approximately two hours after arriving at work (mid-morning).

12:30 pm (Lunch) Pump on your lunch break.

3:00 pm (Break #2) Pump approximately two to three hours after lunch (mid-afternoon).

5:30 pm Feed your baby at the breast after work.

Pumping can take anywhere from 10-20 minutes. Continuing to empty your breasts as much as possible will help maintain milk supply.

What is the best way to store breast milk and how long can it be stored safely?

Below are breast milk storage guidelines.

STORING HUMAN MILK SAFELY		
Storing Breastmilk	Fresh	Thawed
COUNTERTOP up to 77° F	up to 4 HOURS	1-2 HOURS
REFRIGERATOR at or below 40° F	up to 4 DAYS	up to 24 HOURS
FREEZER (with separate door) at or below 0° F	up to 6 MONTHS	NEVER REFREEZE THAWED BREASTMILK
DEEP FREEZER at or below -4° F	up to 12 MONTHS	

These guidelines are for healthy full-term babies. Information from the USDA WIC Services | Oklahoma State Department of Health | www.health.ok.gov

If you plan on using your expressed breast milk within four days, simply put it in the fridge. Otherwise, place it in the freezer.

Helpful Tip: Use a clean ice cube tray to freeze your breast milk. Each cube is approximately one ounce. Freezing milk in smaller quantities will help prevent waste. Once breast milk is thawed and warmed, it cannot be refrozen. Use the oldest milk first.

Is it normal for breastfed babies to take less milk from a bottle than formula fed babies?

Yes! This is completely normal. Breast milk contains a hormone called Leptin, which helps to let baby know when they are full and prevents overeating. This is one reason breastfeeding helps to prevent childhood obesity. It is also normal for breastfed babies to prefer to breastfeed directly from the breast vs. from a bottle. Sometimes babies will drink less milk from a bottle and breastfeed more often while with mom. This is called reverse-cycling. There is no reason to worry about your baby's intake as long as they are gaining the recommended amount of weight for age.

WIC can help you prepare to return to work after your baby is born. Contact your local WIC clinic with any questions regarding the breast pump program or maintaining your milk supply after returning to work or school. For tips on getting more milk when you pump, check out our lesson "Pumping Tips." You've got this!

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One More Step

Click here to complete the survey and receive credit.