



Breastfeeding tips & techniques:

Pumping & Storing Breast Milk When You Return to Work



Going back to work

Before returning to work, talk with your supervisor. If you plan to pump breast milk at work, you will need a clean, private place to pump with access to electricity and a sink. You will also need to make arrangements to pump throughout the work day—two to three breaks to pump your milk during each eight hour work period is usually enough. Be as flexible as you can in the early transition back to work. Allow yourself the time to find out what works best for you and your job.

Choose the right pump

For most mothers who work more than 4 hours a day, an electric, double-sided pump (automatic) is the best choice. Double sided means you can pump both of your breasts at the same time, which lets you pump your milk in about 10 – 15 minutes. A hand pump generally is not recommended for use at work. It can take much longer to fully empty both breasts.

Practice pumping

To “let down” your milk when you pump, as you do when you nurse your baby, you need to relax. Start by practicing with your pump at home, before you return to work. Keep practicing until pumping becomes comfortable and easy. Store the milk from your practice sessions in the freezer for a backup supply when you return to work. Be sure to follow the manufacturer’s directions in caring for your pump and supplies.

Pump regularly

Pump during your work hours and also consider pumping at home. Pumping earlier in the day tends to produce more milk than later in the day. If you have a portable pump, or more than one pump, consider pumping once in the early morning before your baby wakes up. Then nurse your baby. Or nurse your baby on one side and pump on the other. If you work a shift for 8 or more hours and can’t pump at home, talk to your manager about how to schedule three (or more for longer shifts) pumping breaks at regular times throughout your shift.

Where to pump at work

Pump in a private, sanitary place where you can relax. Wash your hands before pumping. Stay hydrated; drink water before, during, and after pumping. You may want to consider bringing a

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breastfeeding
advice or help?

It is OK to **ASK** for help:

CALL your doctor or pediatrician » **CONTACT** a lactation consultant » **REFER** to the numerous resources listed at www.abbottnutrition.com/breastfeeding
» **FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:** www.corporatevoices.org/lactation

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24/7 live help. Nurses and lactation consultants available.
Call Feeding Expert: 1-800-986-8800.





picture of your baby to help you relax and your milk let down. You may also wish to listen to soothing music or bring something to read.

Clothing and equipment

Wear clothes that are comfortable and make it easy to pump. Pack a bag that contains everything you will need, including your pump and attachments, cleaning supplies, containers, masking tape and marker to label milk containers (with name, date, and time), breast pads, and ice pack and cooler. If your employer provides a pump, make sure to get the proper accessory kit that works with the pump you will use. You may want to consider keeping spare clothes to change into in case of any mishaps while pumping. Special bras for nursing are also helpful to have.

Keys to saving and storing milk

... **FRESH MILK**—You can keep freshly expressed breast milk safely at room temperature for up to 6 hours at up to 77 degrees F. To preserve all the protective benefits of fresh milk, it is best to keep it in a refrigerator or cooler as soon as it is pumped.

... **FROZEN MILK**—If you do not plan to use pumped breast milk within 5 days, freeze it. Thawed milk will keep in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours. Never refreeze milk that was previously stored in a freezer unit or deep freezer. You can keep milk for 3 to 4 months in a refrigerator freezer or up to 6 months in a deep freezer. Keep breast milk in the back of the freezer where the temperature is less likely to vary.

... **THAWED MILK**—Thaw frozen breast milk by running warm water over the container. Do not thaw breast milk at room temperature. Do not bring it to a boil and never use a microwave to heat breast milk. Thawed milk can be refrigerated for up to 24 hours. Do not refreeze once thawed.

... **CONTAINERS**—You can store breast milk in:

- Glass or plastic containers—freezer safe if necessary
- Plastic freezer bags designed to store breast milk—be sure they are clean and only used once.
- Disposable bottle liners are not recommended for storing milk. Do not fill container completely if freezing as liquids expand during freezing.

NOTE: Label each container with your baby's name and the date the breast milk was pumped and the date to discard.

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LOCATION	TEMPERATURE	DURATION	COMMENTS
Countertop, table	Room Temperature up to 77° F [25° C]	Discard After 6 – 8 Hours	Cover container and keep as cool as possible
Insulated cooler bag	5° – 39° F [-15° C up to 4° C]	Discard After 24 Hours	Keep ice packs in contact with milk at all times
Refrigerator	39° F [4° C]	Discard After 5 Days	Store milk in the back of the main part
Freezer compartment of refrigerator	5° F [-15° C]	Discard After 2 Weeks	Store milk toward the back of the freezer, where temperature is most constant
Freezer compartment of refrigerator with separate doors	0° F [-18° C]	Discard After 3 – 6 Months	
Chest or upright deep freezer	-4° F [-20° C]	Discard After 6 – 12 Months	

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