

- Get your bag and the baby's ready the night before to give you both a little extra time in the mornings.

Tips from some mums who have returned to work and continued breastfeeding. Some of these may be worth considering:

- Return to work as late as possible. Perhaps delay your return till your baby is a bit older.
- Maybe working part-time or flexible hours is an option for a while.
- Use a crèche at work, or use childcare near work, so you can feed at lunchtime.
- Express milk at work and store for later use, and build up a small supply.
- Try to get your partner, or a friend, to give the baby its first feed otherwise your baby may become confused as to what's going on! If you need to give the first bottle feed yourself, avoid using your usual nursing position and disguise the smell of your milk, perhaps by wearing someone else's jumper.
- Breastfeed when at home with your baby, even if you can't express and have to use formula when apart.

Remember: breastfeeding and working allows:

- continuing health benefits for you and your baby. Every feed is of value.
- baby-led weaning: best for baby, best for you.
- you to do something for your baby while you are at work.
- relaxation for you both at the end of the working day.
- no worries about shopping for and preparing formula in advance.

Further information available

ABA booklets *Breastfeeding, Women and Work*, *Expressing and Storing Breast Milk* and *Storage Guidelines for Expressed Breast Milk* (double-sided fridge magnet) are available from the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers – see the ABM order form or website.

The Maternity Alliance produces *Having it all: a woman's guide to combining breastfeeding and work*, price £2.50 + p&p.

The Maternity Alliance
Third Floor West, 2-6 Northburgh St
LONDON, EC1V 0AY

Office: 020 7490 7639
Info Line: 020 7490 7638
www.maternityalliance.org.uk

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers

PO Box 207, Bridgwater, TA6 7YT
Website: www.abm.me.uk

E-mail: info@abm.me.uk
Counselling Helpline: 0870 401 7711

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Association of Breastfeeding



**Returning to work?
Breastfeeding?
You can do both!**

*(Expressing and Storing
Breast Milk insert enclosed)*

Mothers

Charity Registration No. 280537

Why continue to breastfeed when going back to work?

- Breast milk is free and the *perfect natural and normal food* for your baby.
- Breastfed babies are generally healthier than their formula-fed counterparts. This leads to less time off work for the parents, caring for a sick child.
- Breastfeeding can be quicker and, with organisation, easier than using formula.
- Breastfeeding is also beneficial for the health of the mother.

"I have returned to work now twice full-time. My first child was bottle-fed so I was apprehensive the second time about how breastfeeding would go when I returned. I had excellent information from a breastfeeding counsellor about different options and I'm particularly happy that I kept breastfeeding and working."

Can I plan before my baby arrives?

Arrange your maternity leave, and negotiate for any changes to your working day. Find out if there are adequate facilities for expressing. You are entitled to somewhere private and suitable and should not be expected to use the toilet. Just because no one has asked before doesn't mean somewhere can't be found. Health and Safety Legislation should safeguard your health and by not breastfeeding you are at a higher risk of developing certain health problems – it is in your employer's interest to help safeguard your health while at work. There are rules too about exposure to hazardous chemicals etc. **Contact a breastfeeding counsellor or health visitor for practical advice.** The Maternity Alliance will also be able to give you information about your rights.

What do I need to arrange before I return to work?

- **Choose childcare** you are happy with. Explore how different options will fit into different working patterns, such as a carer close to your work or nearer to your home. Meet with your chosen carer, explain your wishes regarding all aspects of your baby's care and introduce carer and baby to each other.
- Try to **make contact** with other mothers who have successfully worked and breastfed.
- **Let your manager (or personnel officer) know** you are breastfeeding and discuss breaks for expressing milk. If they are unhelpful, contact your union rep, equal opportunities officer or the Maternity Alliance.
- **Think about how** your baby will be fed while you are away. Babies don't necessarily need a bottle although for a younger baby (below 5 month or so) bottles may be the most practical solution. An older baby may be happy with a soft spouted beaker.
- Consider **what** your baby will drink: depending on the baby's age and how long you will be apart this may be expressed breast milk (EBM), cooled boiled water or a combination of EBM and modified cow's milk. Offer your baby such drinks before you return to work. Ideally get someone else to do this for you. A couple of weeks before you return should be enough. Introducing a bottle in the first

few weeks of a baby's life can interfere with getting breastfeeding and a good milk supply established.

- The needs of a very young baby whose mother is returning to work full time will be different to that of an older baby whose mother is returning part time. A baby of 8 months who has started taking solid food will have less need for milk while you are at work. Your baby can have water or some EBM and some water in a beaker rather than milk in a bottle. Your ABM counsellor or health visitor can discuss the options with you.
- **Practise expressing milk**, and build up a small store in the freezer in advance, even if you decide not to express enough milk at work for all your baby's needs. It will be useful to be able to express a little breast milk to prevent engorgement or leaking in the early days back at work and keep your supply up for when you want to breastfeed at home. Different methods suit different people and working situations. Don't be put off if you don't succeed or only get a few drops the first time.

"I could only get a few drops of milk with my hand pump when my baby was small but when I went back I found it much easier. The first day the milk took a little while to come, possibly because I was a bit anxious, but after that it wasn't a problem. I used to express about 5 ounces every lunchtime and put the bottle in an ice-cream carton in the fridge".

- If expressing milk for your baby, investigate storage facilities at work. You may need to negotiate use of a fridge. **Check the facilities** you need are in place at work before your return date. You may be able to use a medical room or a vacant office for example.

What about when I actually return?

- Try to arrange to start work near the end of the week so that you and your baby can adjust gradually to the new routines.
- Expect your baby to feed more often when you are at home. at least at first Your baby will need to do this to increase your milk supply again after you have been apart, and to 'welcome' you back. Arrange a little extra help if possible or ignore household chores until the weekend.
- Try to express at regular intervals while at work, ideally when the baby would normally feed.
- It can help to have photos of the baby with you, as looking at them or thinking about your baby while expressing can help the milk flow.
- When not at work you can breastfeed on demand or keep to the same routine as on workdays. Whatever you decide your breasts and your baby will adapt.
- You may leak a little until your body adjusts to a new pattern of breastfeeding and expressing. So remember breast pads when you first return to work and it may be an idea to wear patterned clothing at first.

Expressing and Storing Breast Milk

Information from the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers

- Placing the container in a bowl of warm water and changing the water frequently.
- Holding the container of milk under cold running water.
- Never defrost breast milk in a microwave. It can break down some properties and cause 'hot spots' that could burn the baby's mouth.

Gently shake the milk before use, the fats may have separated. Don't shake the milk vigorously – you are not trying to make butter.

Using Expressed Breast Milk (EBM)

Depending on age and health, your baby may be fed EBM in a number of different ways: by cup, spoon, feeder cup, tube, 'supply line' - don't automatically think 'bottle'. If you need help with any of these methods contact a breastfeeding counsellor for information. Many mothers do use a bottle but be aware that there are other options and a bottle could lead to breast refusal. ALL babies should be weaned from a bottle by the age of 1 year. EBM can be used straight from the fridge, but for preference most babies would like it at 'skin' temperature – so just take the 'chill' out by running a warm tap over the container.

Are There Any Other Tips?

- Express as often as your baby would normally feed, if possible. If you are separated from your baby while expressing, thinking about or looking at a picture of the baby may help.
- Try expressing from one breast when your baby is feeding from the other. This takes advantage of the natural Milk Ejection reflex. It is possible to do, but easier if you are using an automatic pump. Most babies get used to the noise of the motor quickly – nothing stops a hungry baby feeding!
- When transporting **frozen** EBM in a cold box, don't use freezer blocks (these are actually 'warmer' than **frozen** EBM and will tend to start to thaw the milk.)
- Some babies refuse to take milk from a bottle at first – this is not unusual. Try to spoon-feed the milk or use a small cup – special ones are available for premature babies. Older babies will often use a beaker or feeder cup.
- Always remember that your baby is the most efficient pump of all!

If you have any problems expressing milk or would like to discuss the storing of breast milk, call the ABM helpline on 0870 401 7711 and speak to a counsellor.

Useful phone numbers for purchasing or hiring electric pumps : Ameda tel: 01823 336362. Medela tel: 0161 776 0400.

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Why Express?

There are many reasons why you may wish or need to express. Here are just a few:

- Leaving baby with a carer for an evening out, or when working or at college.
- To feed a premature baby and to preserve your milk supply.
- Having a baby, toddler or yourself hospitalised.
- For relief if your breasts are engorged or you have sore nipples.
- To increase your supply.
- To reassure yourself that you can do it, should the need arise!

Whatever the reason, expressing, like most things, is easy to do with a little practice. There may be different storage guidelines depending on why you are expressing, so if you want to store milk for a sick or premature baby or to donate to a milk bank, please ask for more information. If you want to express to relieve engorgement or you are returning to work or want to have 'spare' milk for your healthy term baby, then you can follow these storage guidelines. If you are expressing to preserve or increase your supply then you may need to express more frequently than if you were simply doing it to relieve engorgement or to save for use later. A counsellor will be able to discuss your particular situation with you.

How Should I Express?

You can express by hand or use a hand or electric breast pump. If you decide to use a pump – perhaps because you need to express long term – it is still a good idea to learn to express by hand.

There's a first time for everyone when it comes to expressing and it is a skill to practise, so **DON'T FEEL UPSET OR PUT OFF IF ONLY A FEW DROPS COME OUT!** Begin by:

- Relaxing. Sit down with a warm drink before you start – tension may inhibit the Milk Ejection Reflex. The morning is often a good time to try for the first time.
- Warm your breasts, wrapping a warm towel around or express after a shower.
- Gently massage the breast, towards the areola, for a minute or two.
- Experiment – after all every mother is different.

By Hand

- Wash your hands thoroughly (there is no need to wash breasts).
- Ensure that you have a sterilised container (a bowl will do) to express into.
- With the areola between thumb and forefinger, try to feel for small 'pea sized' lumps underneath the perimeter of the areola. Gently cup the breast and press towards the chest, and squeeze, release the pressure, then do it again. Work

around the areola so that your fingers ‘express’ all the ducts. It may take a minute or two before any drops appear, so don’t be disheartened.

By Pump

Most pumps, whether hand, battery or electric, work on a similar principle of creating a vacuum when the funnel has been placed over the areola. Make sure that the funnel isn’t too small when the nipple is brought into the narrow part of the funnel, as this could damage the nipple. The newer hand pumps can be particularly efficient at expressing milk quickly. Milk will often not flow immediately. If your baby is not nearby, it can sometimes help if you think about or look at a photo of the baby. Swap breasts frequently, unless you are ‘double pumping’, eg pump the left breast for four minutes then the right for four minutes, pump the left breast for 3 minutes, right for 3 minutes, left for 2 minutes right for 2 minutes, left for 1 minute then right for 1 minute then stop, unless the milk is still flowing freely. If you are expressing in order to increase supply, continue to pump for an extra minute or two after the last drip of milk. Shorter more frequent pumping sessions are more likely to increase supply than a few long sessions. The reason for switching breasts is to give the milk time to come down from the back of the breasts – rather like a baby having a swallow, deep breath, rest before sucking again (although your baby is doing this much more frequently!)

Battery/Electric Pumps

Some women, however, prefer to use a battery or electric pump instead of a hand pump. Instead of you operating the handle the motor does it for you. On most models the suction strength can be altered as well. This feature is particularly important if you have a very efficient pump! More powerful suction isn’t necessarily the best. Too strong a suction can damage nipples, so find the lowest effective suction rating to suit you. Make sure that the funnel ‘fits’, when the nipple is elongated into the narrow part of the funnel it should not be too small. Once the pump is turned on and the vacuum has been created, milk will be expressed and stored in a collecting bottle attached to the pump. Many pumps have the option to be either battery or electrically-powered or may convert to a hand pump.

Double Pumping

Double pumping means pumping both breasts at the same time, it will usually increase supply more quickly and will obviously make the pumping session shorter. You could do this with two hand pumps or with a double collection set on the larger electric pumps.

Can I Hire a Pump?

Only hospital style electric pumps are available for hire, not hand pumps. They can be hired from pump agents around the country. Your midwife or health visitor may be able to give you a local contact number, if not many breastfeeding counsellors are

pump agents or can put you in touch with one in your area or can advise on where to obtain them directly. Pumps can be hired on a short-term or long-term basis depending on your needs: the counsellor or pump agent will be able to advise you. If your baby is in special care then you may be able to obtain a pump from the hospital. The cost of hiring from a local agent is around £1.10 a day, plus you will need to buy a personal collecting set that costs around £10.

Should I Sterilise the Equipment?

When storing and expressing breast milk it is *imperative* that everything that comes into contact with the milk is sterilised first. This includes all the parts of the breast pump (excluding the motor) as well as the storage containers. Sterilise by using a chemical or steam steriliser or by boiling the equipment for 10 minutes. If you are storing for your OWN, healthy baby, after first sterilising the equipment, it must be sterilised once a week (or more). In between times it can be washed with hot soapy water or put in a dishwasher according to the product's instructions.

How Can I Store Breast Milk?

Storage guidelines suitable for a healthy term born baby (born between 37 and 42 weeks). Different storage times may be needed for sick infants or donated milk.

(ref. Hamosh, 1996)

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| Room temperature 77°F/25°C | Up to 4 hours |
| Room temperature 59°F/15°C | 24 hours in cooler box with ‘freezer pack’ |
| Refrigerator | 3-5 days (best kept at the back of the fridge and not in the door) if milk will be stored longer than this freeze it within 48 hours |
| Previously frozen breast milk in the refrigerator | 24-48 hours |
| Freezer | Up to 12 months depending on the type of freezer |
| Freezer compartment within a fridge | 2 weeks |
| Self-defrosting freezer | 6 months |
| Deep freeze with no defrost cycle | 12 months |

- Refrigerate your milk in a sealed container as soon as possible.
- Store in small quantities - that way you have less waste, and it’s quicker to thaw or warm. Sterilised ice cube trays can be helpful here.

It is possible to collect together milk from a number of expressing sessions, but allow each ‘batch’ to cool before adding it to the sealed container

How Do I Defrost Breast Milk?

It is possible to defrost milk in a number of different ways. These include:

- Placing it in the fridge to defrost slowly.