

BREASTFEEDING AND WORK—MAKING IT WORK!

The thought of returning to work while continuing to breastfeed can feel overwhelming. In the past, many moms felt it was easier to stop breastfeeding once back at work but that's starting to change. Women are finding ways to combine breastfeeding and working with the support of their employer and child care provider.

When I first went back to work after my babies were born, I was fortunate to have a lunch break that gave me enough time to breastfeed at their nearby daycare. I appreciated this chance to re-connect with my baby in the middle of the day and it made it easier to return to work full time. Here are a few suggestions to help you continue breastfeeding after returning to work.

Don't be afraid to discuss your needs with your employer. Your workplace is required to support your breastfeeding under the Human Rights Code. An employer can give you a more flexible schedule or extend breaks to allow time to nurse, pump milk, or visit and breastfeed your baby. Your employer benefits by gaining a happier, more loyal and more productive employee. As a bonus, your baby will likely be sick less often which can mean fewer days missed at work.

Choose a child care provider that is supportive of breastfeeding. Ask if they have a breastfeeding policy. Let them know how important breastfeeding is to you and your baby and discuss your baby's feeding routines. Make sure they can safely prepare and store your expressed breast milk. Having these conversations before you start back to work will make the transition go more smoothly for you and your baby.

Nearby child care arrangements can make breastfeeding during work hours easier. Using an onsite day care or child care near the workplace is ideal for moms to maintain breastfeeding. Some moms have been able to arrange for their child care provider to bring their baby to them at work so they can breastfeed.

If breastfeeding during work hours isn't easy to arrange, you can express some breast milk. Ask your friends or members of a local breastfeeding café for their tips on pumping at work. Your employer can help by providing a private office with a sink, an electrical outlet to pump milk and a place to store pumped milk.

Once your baby is closer to one year of age and your milk supply is well established, you may not need to pump at work. Your toddler may be content to drink expressed breast milk, whole cow milk, or water in a cup while you're at work and continue to breastfeed at home.

Health Canada and Interior Health recommend breastfeeding for two years and beyond. Stopping breastfeeding because of work before you and baby are ready can add extra stress to an already challenging time. Breastfeeding is reassuring to your toddler and you'll benefit from the relaxing hormones released when you nurse.

For more information about returning to work and breastfeeding: <http://bit.ly/1G3o9sd>.

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