



# Breastfeeding Newsletter

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*"Do not restrict your baby's time at the breast, even if it seems like all he wants to do is nurse! This will help your milk to be plentiful when it comes time to pump."*

## Tips for pumping at work

Many mothers decide to go back to work after having a baby and also desire to continue to provide breastmilk exclusively for their baby because of its many benefits. While the thought of pumping your milk at work may seem overwhelming at first, you CAN do it with a little planning and knowledge. It is worth the effort, considering the risks and costs of formula feeding, as well as the precious breastfeeding relationship you will be able to sustain by keeping your milk supply going even while separated from your baby. Leaving your baby to go off to work is easier when you get to nurse and snuggle with him when you get home! Here are some tips to make the transition back to work easier for the breastfeeding mom.

## Know your rights

You (and your employer) may not realize it, but there are laws to protect breastfeeding moms at work. Your employer needs to provide a place for you to pump. It doesn't have to be fancy, but needs to be clean and private. A bathroom is not acceptable. To read about this law check out:

<http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs73.htm>.

## Talk to your employer

You will need to give your place of employment time to accommodate your plans to pump at work. Start the conversation while you are still pregnant, if possible. If you feel uncomfortable speaking with your direct supervisor, go to another manager you feel comfortable with, or to human resources. Be prepared to show the fact sheet found on the website above. Many employers may not be aware of the law, and that's ok! (We employees need learning curves too!) Be respectful and courteous in your request, but be firm. You have a right to express your breastmilk while at work, just like you have a right to empty your bladder. Express that you are willing to work with them to come to a solution that works for everyone. If your employer is uncooperative or you have not yet spoken to them but feel they will be, and would like some assistance, contact your local WIC office's breastfeeding peer counselor.

## Focus on breastfeeding

When you have your baby, spend the first few days putting baby to breast, and save the pumping for later. Do not restrict your baby's time at the breast, even if it seems like all he wants to do is nurse! This will help your milk to be plentiful when it comes time to pump. Although breastfeeding is a natural and beautiful thing, it is rarely "easy" for any mom, so do NOT hesitate to call a lactation consultant or breastfeeding peer counselor for help or to attend a breastfeeding support group. You and baby are learning to breastfeed together and are allowed a few mistakes and rough patches. SEEK SUPPORT if you feel unsure of yourself.

*"Do not be discouraged if you get less than a half ounce when you pump for the first few days or weeks. That is NORMAL."*

## **Obtain a breastpump**

If you are going to be pumping at work, a double-sided electric breastpump is recommended. This type of breast pump is available at most WIC offices to WIC clients. If you have medical insurance, MANY policies now cover breastpumps. Simply call the number on your card and ask what type of breastpump is covered and ask what you need to do in order to receive it. Some Health Departments (Including Pike County Health Department Home Health & Hospice) offer very affordable breastpump rentals to women who do not qualify for WIC. You can also purchase a double sided electric breastpump out of pocket, but good ones will set you back a couple hundred dollars. (There are cheaper ones, but when it comes to breastpumps, you get what you pay for.) Talk to your local lactation consultant or breastfeeding peer counselor about your pump needs. They can help you figure out what you do and don't need and where to find it on your budget.

## **Start pumping by day 14**

Pumping a couple times a day in the early weeks helps your milk supply and allows you to start up a stash of milk to use when you go back to work. Just be gentle! Be very careful to not cause any pain or damage to your sensitive nipples during these early days. If you are swollen or notice any discomfort while or after pumping, ease up on it.

## **Set realistic standards for how much milk you pump**

Do not be discouraged if you get less than a half ounce when you pump for the first few days or weeks. That is NORMAL. (In my opinion, the mom who pumps 8 ounces in 15 minutes the first time she is introduced to a breastpump is an exception and shouldn't be the standard!) Babies tend to be a little better than pumps at getting the milk from the breast. Also consider that in the first few weeks, your baby needs only 1-3 ounces per feeding the first few weeks (check out <http://kellymom.com/bf/pumpingmoms/pumping/milkcalc/> ) depending on how often they eat. Consider that you are pumping "between feedings" which means your baby probably already got most of what is there. It is very normal to get very small amounts in the beginning. If you want to try for larger amounts, pump in the morning or when baby has been asleep for longer periods of time. Just remember that when you go back to work, are practiced at pumping, and are away from your baby for 3-4 hours before pumping, you WILL get more volume! So don't stress. Stress is bad for pumping. In fact, the more relaxed you are, the more milk you will get out while you pump. For this reason, mothers are encouraged to get comfortable while pumping, and look at or think about their baby. I know of one mom who took a short video on her smart phone of her baby nursing at her breast to watch while she pumps. If you have questions about whether your pumping experience is normal, contact a lactation consultant or breastfeeding peer counselor.

## **Introduce a bottle at 4 weeks**

This is the perfect time to give your baby their first bottle. Sooner than this and you risk nipple confusion (ie. Bad latch and pain—not fun), later than this and your baby might be too attached to the breast and could fight the bottle. Pump an ounce or two and offer it in a bottle, no need to offer more than this, since you just want to get your baby used to the bottle. This is also a good time to talk to whoever will be taking care of your baby while you are at work about your plans to feed your baby pumped milk. Make sure they are supportive of this plan and make sure they know milk storage/thawing guidelines. Check out this website: <http://kellymom.com/bf/pumpingmoms/milkstorage/milkstorage/>.

## **Ready, Set, Pump!**

It's come to your first day back at work. Make sure you nurse baby right before leaving home, if possible. Aim to pump at least 3 times if you're working an 8 hour day. Settle down into a comfortable chair with your pump and all required accessories and get situated. Don't forget to lock the door, or if you are behind a curtain, hang a sign. Play some music to drown out the sound of the pump if you're worried about other people hearing it. A lot of women can work while they are pumping. In fact, I am pumping as I type this! (No joke! I really am!) So take something to do with you, whether it's work or Angry Birds. When you're done, chill your milk if you're going to be at work for a few more hours. Either bring a cooler with ice packs, or stash it in the company fridge in a lunch box or bag. And don't forget to take it with you when you leave!

## **What if it's not enough?**

If at the end of the day the amount you pumped is less than the amount your baby ate and you can fit another pumping session, or tack on time to your pumping sessions, do so! If not, talk to your caregiver about when and why they give a bottle. If a bottle is given everytime your baby makes a fuss, they are probably being overfed. Also request that your baby be given his last feeding about 2-3 hours before you're scheduled to pick him up, so that he's hungry when you get home.

Everyone's situation is different, and your situation may need a "customized plan." That's what breastfeeding peer counselors are for! We love to help you succeed at breastfeeding your baby. Don't hesitate to ask a question.

Happy pumping!

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

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