

Breastfeeding: Returning to Work or School



UTAH | WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN

Planning Tips

Balancing motherhood and work or school is challenging, and you can do it! All you need is a desire to provide milk for your baby and a plan for expressing milk. Breastfeeding benefits your employer, too. Breastfed babies are healthier and that means moms miss less work.

Here are some planning tips for providing breast milk for your baby:

- During your pregnancy, talk to your WIC Staff or WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor. They can help you make a plan on talking with your supervisor and how you can feed your baby when you return to work. She can help you make a plan about how you can pump at work, find a private place to express, and store your breast milk.
- Take off as much time as you can. It is best to return to work after breastfeeding is well established, when your infant is 4–6 weeks of age.
- Plan to return to work in the middle of the week to make the transition easier. Gradually adjust to a new schedule by returning to work or school part-time at first.
- Breastfeed frequently when you and baby are together on weekends or evenings. Breastfed



babies who are away from mothers during the day often nurse more at night.

- The law states that “employers shall provide reasonable, unpaid break time and a private, non-bathroom place for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for one year after the child’s birth.” This protects your right to breastfeed. For more information, check out the employment section at www.usbreastfeeding.org for more information.

The Utah Breastfeeding Coalition can provide support and guidance on breastfeeding in the workplace. To learn more about worksite lactation support, go to <http://www.utahbreastfeeding.org/workinfo.php>.



Choosing Childcare

- Find a caregiver close to your work or school.
- Talk to your caregiver and let her know how important breastfeeding is to you and your baby.
- Go to your baby to feed or have your baby brought to you when possible.

Returning to Work or School

- When you pick up your baby, leave your breast milk for the caregiver to feed the next day.
- Share information on storing, thawing, and warming breast milk with the caregiver.
- Breastfeed before you leave your baby and as soon as possible after you pick up your baby. Ask the caregiver to feed your baby just a small amount if your baby is hungry and she expects you to arrive soon.



Getting Ready

A couple of weeks before returning to work or school, begin to express or pump milk a few times a week. Your baby should not get bottles too early since it can change how he breastfeeds with you. Wait until he is at least

4–6 weeks old. Have someone else offer your baby small amounts of breast milk in a bottle every few days. WIC has a variety of pumps that you may borrow. Your Peer Counselor will have some great ideas on how to get ready!



Expressing breast milk:

- Wash your hands with soap and water. Be sure the pump kit and bottles are clean. Follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Try to relax and think of your baby. Look at a picture of your baby, smell your baby's clothing, or listen to a recording of your baby.
- Plan to pump at least as often as your baby would breastfeed. If you are not able to nurse your baby, pump every 2–3 hours during your waking hours and once during the night, or at least 8 times per 24 hours.
- Use flanges large enough for your nipple to move freely in the tunnel. Watch throughout the pumping as your nipple may change and get fuller. Center your nipple in the flange. Little or no part of your areola (dark area of nipple) should be pulled into the tunnel. Contact the WIC Lactation Educator if you need a different or larger size.
- Use a comfortable amount of suction (highest pressure or vacuum that is still comfortable).
- Pump both breasts at the same time. Continue pumping until the spray of milk becomes small or the droplets have stopped.
- Continue pumping and add massage and compression to improve emptying. Compress by cupping your breast with your



Returning to Work or School

fingers on one side and your thumb on the other and apply comfortable pressure.

- Feel for areas of fullness or firmness to know where to move around and direct the massage and compression. Alternate back and forth between the breasts, giving each a short rest between compressions. Milk will spray or flow, and as it slows, release and apply in another area. Gently massaging may also help to release more milk, and may be done before or during a pumping session.
- If soreness or discomfort develops, discontinue and contact a WIC Lactation Educator.



It may be helpful to:

- Use pumped milk only when you are not with your baby.
- Nurse more often when you are with your baby.
- Be aware of how often, and how much milk you are pumping.

- A breast pump halter top can be used to hold the pump flanges in place so that both hands are free for massage and compression.
- Pump after a warm shower or bath or place a warm hand towel over your breasts to help with milk flow.

Try hand expression:

- Cup your breast with your fingers underneath and your thumb on top just outside or behind the areola (dark part of nipple).
- While supporting the breast, gently pull your breast back towards your chest wall.
- Compress and squeeze the breast (slight roll of fingers) to empty the ducts and express milk. Do not just squeeze the breast forward, or slide the fingers; that will not bring more milk. Holding the breast in the same manner, rotate your hand position around in either direction to express milk in different areas of the breast. Do the same on both breasts.

Storing breast milk:

- Store your breast milk in a clean disposable nursing bag, hard plastic or glass bottle. If using a disposable bag you may want to double bag it if you plan to freeze the breast milk.
- Store in amounts equal to about 1 feeding since leftover milk should be discarded.



Returning to Work or School

- Label container with date and also name if storing for child care, work or school.
- For feeding, warm milk only to room temperature.
- Gently swirl the milk. It is normal for human milk to separate.
- For storing, do not add warm milk to cooled milk. Cool the milk first and then add to already cooled milk. Do not add milk to frozen milk.
- Thaw in refrigerator overnight or thaw under warm running water. Never use a microwave.
- If you have a very small baby or a special needs baby, ask your hospital for special instructions for storing and pumping.

<i>Storing Your Breast Milk for Healthy Full Term Infants</i>		
Place	How Long	Tips
Room temperature (60-85 degree F)	Up to 3-4 hours	Containers should be covered.
Small cooler (ice or packs) (59 degrees F)	Up to 24 hours	Keep ice or packs in contact with containers. Limit opening bag.
Refrigerator (39 degrees F or cooler)	Up to 72 hours	Store in back. Write date on label or tape on container. If unsure if baby will use milk, freeze to avoid wasting. Use the oldest milk first.
Freezer (24 degrees F)	Up to 6 months 1 year if at 0 degrees F	Store in the back (not in the door) and not touching the sides or bottom of freezer. Leave space at the top for expansion. Label container with date. Use oldest milk first.
Thawed milk in refrigerator	Up to 24 hours	Thaw in refrigerator overnight or thaw under warm running water or in bowl. Never use microwave. Do not re-freeze.

*For additional brochures on breastfeeding
ask your WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor
for:*

- Breastfeeding: The Best Start
 - Breastfeeding: Tips for Success
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**UTAH DEPARTMENT OF
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