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The Corporate Lactation Services
Newsletter

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RETURNING TO WORK

by Jenny Bowen, RN, IBCLC, CIMI, June, 2018

Congratulations on continuing to provide your milk for your baby.

Each new step in the breastfeeding process often brings a few new challenges and considerations. The longer babies are breastfed, the greater the health benefits to both mother and baby, plus, it's a great way to reconnect with your baby after separation! The purpose of this newsletter is to talk about the transition back to work and how (and why) to continue to provide your baby with the best nutrition, **your milk!**

WHY CONTINUE BREASTFEEDING WHEN RETURNING TO WORK?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusively breastfeeding for at least 12 months (the first 6 months exclusive, the second 6 months with the addition of solids) and thereafter for as long as mother and baby desire. The longer babies are breastfed, the greater the health benefits to both mother and baby.

Did you know that breastfeeding your baby decreases your risk of osteoporosis? It also reduces your risk of diabetes, breast and ovarian cancer and it increases rate of weight loss in most mothers.

The World Health Organization recommends continued breastfeeding up to 2 years of age and beyond.

Your baby will continue to benefit from your milk as the antibodies in your milk have been shown to result in fewer and shorter episodes of illness. Breast-milk has been shown to increase IQ, reduce risk of obesity, lead to fewer allergies and increase the effectiveness of immunizations.

Your workplace also benefits from you breastfeeding your baby. Studies show that breastfeeding reduces employees' absence from work for baby's illness.

And finally, your community is improved with the "green" aspects of nursing! Breastfeeding is naturally- renewable resource that requires no packaging, shipping or disposal.



PREPARATION FOR RETURNING TO WORK

Women everywhere are returning to work and successfully continuing to breastfeed. Advanced planning, family and workplace support help create success for working moms. With your program through Corporate Lactation Services, your lactation consultant will help you develop a plan that can help you to reach your goals in continuing to breastfeed with return to work.

Typically, it is recommended that you spend the first 4 weeks of your baby's life holding your baby skin to skin, and breastfeeding on demand to allow your milk production to synchronize with your baby's needs. This is also a time for your baby to become very good at latching on.

Generally, at about 4 weeks of age, if breastfeeding is going well, we begin to talk about pumping once a day after a breastfeed. Establishing a regular routine of pumping daily can allow your body to begin to get the signal/message to make more milk for storage. Having at least 2 - 3 weeks prior to return to work can allow time to build up a supply. Your Lactation Consultant can assist you in planning how much milk to have stored prior to your return to work. Once you have some milk collected, you may want to consider introducing your baby to the bottle.

If you will not be returning to work until your baby is older (for example, 6 months old), you may want to exclusively breastfeed and then transition your baby to a sippy cup for the times when you are separated.

SOME PUMPING TIPS

Your body has been working hard to increase your milk production to meet your baby's growing needs. It can take some time for your body to increase production to begin to store some extra milk. Remember, a baby can get more milk from the breasts than the pump can.

Some moms find it helpful to begin an extra pumping in the morning when the hormone that makes milk is highest. For example, you might breastfeed your baby in the morning. Then, after the feeding is complete you may want to take a short 15 - 20 min break to take care of your needs, possibly have a cup of warm tea etc. Then, plan to pump for about 5 - 10 minutes.

It can be helpful to put some heat on your breasts. You can use a warm wet washcloth or heating pad on low. Then, massage your breasts and begin pumping. It can help to warm the flanges too.

Pump both breasts. The breast that you just finished feeding on may not produce much extra milk, but you can combine the bottles. This will mix the higher fat milk with the lower fat milk from the breast that your baby did not feed on as much.

Timing the pumping shortly after a feed will help to be sure there is plenty of milk ready for your baby at the next feeding. As you find that your production is increasing, you can increase the amount of time that you are pumping by 5 - 10 minutes if you like. You may find that this routine is one that you want to continue daily, even once your return to work to store a little extra milk.

Be sure to follow manufacture recommendations for replacing parts on your pump, especially if you are finding any problems with suction.

HOW TO INTRODUCE THE BOTTLE

Often, by the time babies are about 4 weeks old, they have become pretty good at latching and breastfeeding. If this is not the case, please contact your CLS Lactation Consultant to discuss. Typically, babies do well accepting a bottle when they are 4 – 6 weeks of age. Ideally, having an alternate caregiver introduce the bottle can be helpful. Baby associates mom with the pleasure of nursing and will often hold out for the real thing. Infant should be held in an upright position when fed from a bottle. It can be helpful to stroke your baby's lips with the nipple to encourage a big, open mouth like with breastfeeding prior to inserting the bottle nipple.

Caregiver should encourage frequent pauses to mimic the breastfeeding mother's let-down patterns. This discourages a baby from guzzling the bottle. For a video on paced bottle feeding see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UH4T70OSzGs&feature=youtu.be>

If bottle feeding goes well, you will want to continue to keep this alternate feeding method as part of your baby's routine. Possibly, making sure your baby gets a bottle at least a few times per week.

Having an alternate caregiver introduce the bottle can be helpful.

Start with fresh milk (not previously frozen) that is warmed to room temperature. You can warm milk by placing in a cup/bowl of warm water. Never microwave the milk. When you drip the milk on your wrist, it should feel warm but not hot.

Once your baby is doing well with the bottle, consider offering some thawed milk for occasional feedings. Sometimes thawed milk tastes (and smells) different than fresh milk. Often, babies accept this taste difference better early on.

Further information can be found in CLS newsletter "Information on the Transition to Bottle Feeding".

HOW TO HANDLE & STORE YOUR MILK

These guidelines are for a full term, healthy infant. (If you have a preterm infant, please follow NICU guidelines for storage and handling of milk.)

Freshly Expressed Milk - at Room Temperature for 4 - 6 hours.

Freshly Expressed Milk - in a cooler with frozen ice packs for 24 hours.

Freshly Expressed Milk - in a refrigerator for up to 5 days

Freshly Expressed Milk - in a freezer for up to 6 months or a deep freezer for up to 12 months.

Thawed Milk - use within 24 hours - never refreeze milk once it has been thawed.

Milk left over from a feeding - Use within 1 -2 hours after baby has finished the feeding.

Wash your hands well with soap and water prior to pumping and handling milk. It has been found that the longer times for storage are safe when bacteria counts are lowest with clean equipment and clean hands.

Some moms have found it helpful to run their pump for a few minutes after they are done pumping and have removed the bottles from the tubing. This can help clear condensation from the tubing. Regularly inspect your tubing. See your pump instructions for cleaning tubing if needed.



Please follow CDC guidelines for cleaning your breast pump parts. Link to website:
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/hygiene/breast-pump-fact-sheet.pdf>

It is normal for pumped milk to vary in color and consistency depending on your diet. Stored milk will separate into layers and the cream will rise to the top. Gently swirl (don't shake) the bottle after it has been warmed to mix the milk layers.

Pumped milk may be added to frozen milk once it has been chilled and the quantity is less than what is frozen. Layering should take place just one time.

Freeze milk in 2 - 4 ounce portions. Small amounts thaw more quickly. Be sure to leave some extra room at the top (at least an inch) of the container for freezing expansion.

If you do not plan to use the milk within a few days, freeze it right away in the coldest section of your freezer. This is usually towards the back of the freezer and away from the walls of a self-defrosting freezer.

Thaw your milk overnight in the refrigerator or place in a small bowl of warm water. Thawed milk is safe in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours from the time it defrosted.

Label your milk with the date and time that you pump. If your baby will be at a daycare, be sure to include your baby's name.



HOW MUCH MILK WILL MY BABY NEED WHEN I RETURN TO WORK?

In the past it was thought that mothers needed to make more and more milk as their babies grew. Scientists now know that a healthy, full milk supply remains constant over the six months of exclusively breastfeeding. Generally, the amount of milk your baby is taking at 2 months is about 25 - 30 oz/day. They are often taking about the same amount of milk at 6 months of age when they are ready to start solids. The amount of milk each baby takes can vary somewhat based on baby's needs.

To figure out how much milk your baby will need when separated from you, it can help to look at your baby's total number of feedings per day and then divide that number into the total volume needed. For example, if your baby typically eats about 7 times a day, and you will be gone for 8 hours with the plan to breastfeed your baby 4 times when home, you could expect your baby to take 3 feedings while separated - each approximately 4 oz. Your Lactation Consultant can assist you in this planning.

BACK TO WORK

Going back to work can be filled with many emotions and sometimes a bit overwhelming. Start slowly if possible, working half days initially or returning to work mid-week. If you can work part-time, it is helpful to take Wednesday off to give you a day to rest and breastfeed with your baby in the middle of the week. On your days off, plan to nap and breastfeed with your baby. Protect your milk supply while at work by pumping about every 3 hours.

The milk that you pump at work one day, may be used the next day to feed your baby. This ensures your baby is primarily getting fresh milk. Some mother's will freeze the milk pumped on Friday and then pull out some of the oldest frozen milk for Monday to keep their frozen supply fresh. After pumping, be sure to label your milk. Then chill milk in a refrigerator or a cooler with frozen ice packs.

Plan your wardrobe to include two-piece clothing that opens easily at the waist and makes pumping easier. Consider clothing that will not show stains in case leaking occurs. Dark solid colors or patterns work well. Possibly keep an extra neutral colored shirt at work in case a change of clothing is necessary. Breast pads are also an idea to help manage leaking.

Some mother's find it helpful to schedule their pumping times to include an alert as a reminder. Plan what techniques may help you to be able to relax when pumping. Some mother's find it helpful to have a picture or video of their baby to look at during pumping. Others find having some relaxing music is helpful. Possibly, a hands free bustier will give you the ability to continue working as you pump.

Use techniques as mentioned earlier to help with your milk flow such as using massage (and heat if possible) before your pumping session and then again at the halfway point to help your milk let down. Total pumping time should be 15 - 20 minutes with a short break in the middle to take some deep breaths and massage your breasts a second time.

A few options to ensure that your pump parts are clean and ready to use for the next pumping session:

- If a sink is available, use some dish soap and wash parts after use. Use a paper towel to dry.
- If a sink is not available, using products such as Medela Quick Clean Wipes to remove the milk from your parts.
- Have spare sets of the parts that touch the milk. Go to work with 3 clean sets, return home with 3 dirty sets. Consider wiping the parts down quickly so the milk does not dry on and become difficult to clean.
- Clean all parts thoroughly when you get home per CDC guidelines.
- If you will be traveling with your work, please talk with your CLS Lactation Consultant. We also have a CLS Travel Newsletter and shipping options that you may find helpful.
- Using your hands to help increase how well your breasts empty during a pumping session can also be helpful. A video link that shows this technique can be found at:
<https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/maximizing-milk-production.html>
- Plan to pack a healthy snack and some water to have during each pumping session.
- If your milk supply is low, breastfeeding or pumping more often is the simplest way to increase your supply. Please reach out to your CLS Lactation Consultant for further details.
- There are many options in returning to work as a breastfeeding mother. These include full breastfeeding/breastmilk feeding to partial breastfeeding/breast milk feeding with supplements. We are here to support you to meet your goals.
- Every drop of your milk is a wonderful gift for your baby!

LAWS SUPPORTING BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS WITH RETURN TO WORK

In your transition back to work, early communication with your employer is essential. It is also helpful to know your rights as a breastfeeding employee.

Since 2010, the federal “Breaktime for Nursing Mother’s Law” has helped make working and breastfeeding possible for more moms. The law requires employers to provide break time and a private place for hourly paid employees to pump breast milk during the work day.

The link to the United States Department of Labor to review this law can be found at:
<https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs73.pdf>

The link to review your state’s law can be found at:
<http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/p/cm/ld/fid=232>



Contact us!

My Lactation Consultant's name & number are:

REFERENCES

See www.corporatelactation.com for products to support your breastfeeding needs.

Lauwers, J., Swisher, A. Counseling the Nursing Mother: A Lactation Consultant’s Guide, 6 th ed. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning; 2016.

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