

# THE EMPLOYED BREASTFEEDING MOTHER

Returning to work can be stressful situation and emotional. The good news is you CAN do it.

## Getting Ready

Choosing someone to care for your baby is one of your most important decisions. If care is available in your workplace, that is ideal since you could breastfeed at work.

There are many breast pumps to choose from. A rental hospital grade pump or a personal use breast pump are most suitable for a mother who wishes to maintain her supply by pumping at work. Talk to your employer about a private, clean place that you can use your pump. Make sure you know how to attach your pump kit and how to use the pump.

You may want to stockpile some milk prior to returning to work to use as a “back-up.” About 1 week’s worth of milk in your freezer will give you confidence that you have some breastmilk to fall back on as you get adjusted to the new routine.

## Pumping

Plan to pump the same number of times that the baby will be feeding while you are gone. Try to maintain a routine in your scheduled pumping sessions. Skipping or postponing pumping too often will affect your milk supply. Do the best you can. The more you pump the more milk you will make, so make a priority of pumping on a regular basis. If you see your supply wane during the week, breastfeed exclusively on your days off and do a bit of extra pumping if you have time.

Start the suction on low each time you pump and gradually increase the suction (over the first 3-2 minutes) to the maximum setting that is comfortable for you. Watch for 3-2 let-down reflexes. Pump for 3-2 minutes after the last drops of milk. If you are pressed for time, short frequent sessions are better than just one long one.

## Storing your milk

- Freshly pumped breastmilk is good at room temperature for 4 hours. Or you may choose to chill it for the trip home if it will be longer than 4 hours. Freezer packs are handy for this.
- Breastmilk stored in the refrigerator is good for 7-5 days
- Breastmilk can be frozen for 6-3 months. Once you have thawed previously frozen breastmilk, it is only good for 24 hours!

It is a good idea at first to keep milk in small quantities until you have a good idea of how much your baby will take at one time. Milk left over in the bottle must be discarded if not consumed. You will hate to do that!



**Pump directly into a feeding bottle or a plastic storage bag**