

Pumping at Work

THE WORKING PARENT'S GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING



Many parents choose to breastfeed because of the many benefits that it offers. However, it can be difficult to maintain once parental leave has ended, resulting in an undesired conclusion. There are many difficulties that can get in the way of having an enjoyable breastfeeding experience, but with the right tools you and your baby can still thrive during this time.

Whether you nurse your baby or express milk with a pump, there is no wrong way to breastfeed. This guide will use the terms “pumping” and “nursing” when a differentiation is needed.

BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding is linked to many positive physical, economic, and emotional outcomes. There is strong evidence of its protection against numerous adverse health conditions including respiratory tract infections, gastrointestinal illnesses, ear infections, UTI's, sudden infant death syndrome, asthma, dental caries, leukemia, and other types of cancers.

Formula offers nutrients that aid in protecting against many of these illnesses as well. However, it is unable to fully match the immunological and antibacterial properties that are created in breastmilk specifically for the infant's needs. Additionally, there is an added level of risk of exposure to pathogens from preparation and storage of formula.

Parents can benefit greatly from the economic and emotional outcomes of breastfeeding. The average infant consumes almost 6,000 ounces of formula or breastmilk in the first six months of life. At \$0.10-\$0.30 per ounce, parents can spend from \$600 to \$1,800 on formula during that time.

Additionally, the physical and emotional bond of breastfeeding cannot be replicated. Studies have shown that nursing increases the likelihood that the child will form a secure attachment to the parent.



RETURNING TO WORK

Many mothers are hesitant to continue their breastfeeding journey after their maternity leave has ended. They may worry that the time and effort of maintaining their breastfeeding status will hinder their job and create resentment from co-workers and subordinates. However, employers reap many benefits of their employees pumping at work. It reduces the risk of health issues, thus decreasing absences due to sick children. It also promotes an earlier return from maternity leave and increases the retention of female employees.

Returning to work after having a baby can be overwhelming, especially if you are still breastfeeding. Expressing and storing milk while at work does not have to be an intimidating task. There are several ways that you can make the experience as easy and efficient as possible.

PUMPING AT WORK

BREAST PUMP

First, make sure that you have a breast pump that works well, is easy to transport, and has a good battery life. Many insurances cover some or all of the cost of a breast pump and it can usually be ordered prior to birth. Additionally, a pumping bra can be purchased for hands-free pumping.

BOTTLE

Before returning to work, you'll want to find a bottle that your baby likes. Often, parents try several different brands and types before choosing one that is a good fit. It is recommended that parents provide at least one bottle feeding per day prior to returning to work so that your baby can easily adjust when you are away.

SUPPLY

Having an ample supply of frozen milk will relieve stress for you and create a buffer in case you are unable to keep up with your baby's milk consumption while you are working.

PUMPING KIT

Putting together a pumping bag for your workday ensures that you have everything you need for your pump breaks. It could include milk storage bags, snacks, water, alcohol wipes, breast pads, a manual or silicone pump, extra pump parts, and a small insulated cooler with ice packs. It is helpful to have a list of these items to refer to as you get ready for work in the morning.

STORAGE

Breast milk can be refrigerated for 4 days before it needs to be consumed or frozen. Ideally, your workplace will have a designated refrigerator (or refrigerator shelf) for you to store your milk until you go home for the day. However, it is a good idea to bring an insulated cooler with ice packs to ensure that your milk does not go to waste. Make sure to label the date, time, and amount in ounces on each container of milk before storing it. You can also refrigerate your pump parts between sessions during the day and wash them when you get home.

FEEDING AND PUMPING SCHEDULE

It is helpful for a breastfeeding parent to create a schedule that details pumping and nursing times. This not only removes the worry of missing a pumping session, but it also helps you to regulate your body's milk supply. Below you will find a sample schedule that can help you determine the best routine for feeding your baby.

This feeding schedule accounts for nursing when the parent is home. However, some parents choose to exclusively pump once the breastfeeding parent returns to work. There is no right or wrong way to breastfeed your baby, and this schedule can be modified as you see fit. It is catered to an infant between 2-4 months, as this is the typical timeframe that parents return to work. Feedings may need to be spaced longer for infants older than 4 months.

5:00 AM Pump or nurse

7:00 AM Nurse

10 AM Pump

12:30 PM Pump

3:00 PM Pump

6:00 PM Nurse

8:00 PM Nurse

10:00 PM Nurse

Nurse or pump on demand throughout the night

CAREGIVER INSTRUCTIONS

You may choose to create a similar schedule for the baby's daytime caregiver to refer to for bottle feedings. This will help to maintain a routine for you and your baby.

WORKSITE LACTATION LAWS

Many parents do not realize that they are legally entitled to some breastfeeding accommodations while at work. Knowledge and implementation of these laws can create a more comfortable work environment for breastfeeding employees.

FEDERAL LAW

The U.S. Department of Labor has provided an overview of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Section 7 - Break Time for Nursing Mothers Provision. This law states:

1. "An employer shall provide a) a reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for 1 year after the child's birth each time such employee has need to express the milk; and b) a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk."

- "Reasonable" break time is expected to be different for each individual. This should include the time it takes to retrieve pump, walk to designated pumping space, express milk, clean, and return to work.

2. "An employer shall not be required to compensate an employee receiving reasonable break time under paragraph (1) for any work time spent for such purpose."

3. "An employer that employs less than 50 employees shall not be subject to the requirements of this subsection, if such requirements would impose an undue hardship by causing the employer significant difficulty or expense when considered in relation to the size, financial resources, nature, or structure of the employer's business."

- Such employers are only exempt if the Department of Labor can prove "undue hardship" after a complaint has been made from a breastfeeding employee.

4. "Nothing in this subsection shall preempt a state law that provides greater protections to employees than the protections provided for under this subsection."

WORKSITE LACTATION LAWS

UTAH STATE LAW

In addition to federal law, Utah employees are entitled to even more specific breastfeeding accommodations.

House Bill 242, enacted in 2015 reiterates the federal law as explained previously, adding that "a public employer is to provide a public employee access to a room with privacy and a refrigerator for breastfeeding purposes. It cannot be a toilet stall or bathroom, and must have an electrical outlet. This law adopts policies to support breastfeeding; and prohibits a public employer from discriminating against an employee who is breastfeeding in the workplace." It also explains that breastfeeding employees are not in violation of obscene or indecent exposure laws.

Senate Bill 59, enacted in 2016 focuses on antidiscrimination in the workplace. It states that an employee not working in an office building may be provided a nonelectric insulated container for storage. The employer shall include written notice concerning an employee's rights to reasonable breastfeeding accommodations in a handbook or another conspicuous place. Lastly, employers should promote breastfeeding and be aware of the benefits to the employer, employee, and the breastfed infant.

It is important to note that a breastfeeding employee who is not protected by the reasonable accommodation laws because their child is older than one year is still protected by the antidiscrimination provisions. S.B. 59 states that "an employer may not refuse to hire, promote, discharge, demote, or terminate a person, or to retaliate against, harass, or discriminate in matters of compensation or in terms, privileges, and conditions of employment against a person otherwise qualified, because of pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions". It further explains that "pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions include breastfeeding or medical conditions related to breastfeeding.