



A BREASTFEEDING GUIDE
for
WORKING MOMS



Congratulations to a Great Mom

Congratulations on your decision to breastfeed. With this single act you are giving your baby the best possible start in life. That's why so many moms are choosing to breastfeed. In fact, three out of four women in Texas start out breastfeeding their infants, and many of them continue after returning to work. So can you.

This booklet was written by working moms who have had success returning to work while breastfeeding. It's full of good information and tips to help you find success, too.

Good for your baby. Good for you. There are so many great reasons to keep breastfeeding after you return to work. The longer you breastfeed, the fewer illnesses your child will have and the less work you will miss. Did you know that as soon as you pick up a toy at your baby's child care, your body begins to make breastmilk with antibodies that protect your baby from the germs living on that toy?

That's how great your milk is.

Your child's risk of developing obesity, diabetes, and other conditions also decreases with every additional month you breastfeed. In short, your milk is not just food, it's protection. You can't buy that in a can at the grocery store.

Of course, there are benefits for you, too. You can burn up to 600 calories a day simply by breastfeeding, which makes it much easier for you to lose your pregnancy weight. Nursing your baby also decreases your risk for type 2 diabetes. And your risk of breast cancer decreases more with each additional month you breastfeed.

"I'm so glad I continued breastfeeding after returning to work.

It was something only I could give him, it built a great bond between us, helped me

lose all my baby weight and then some, and built his immunity."

– EMILY, BREASTFEEDING MOTHER



Your preparation will pay off. The fewer details your employer has to figure out, the smoother this process will be.

You Can Do This: What Working Moms Know

All kinds of working moms have successfully continued to breastfeed after returning to work—from teachers and administrative staff to waitresses, sales professionals, and even celebrities. One thing all of these moms have in common is that each talked with her employer before her baby was born—and also did a bit of research before their conversation.

Here are five suggestions to help you learn about your employer's policies and the experiences of others. This knowledge will give you more confidence when you do talk to your employer.

1. Go to TexasMotherFriendly.org to see whether your employer's business or workplace is a designated Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite and to learn more about the program.
2. Talk to your friends and family. Find out whether they have any experience with breastfeeding while at work and ask for their support.
3. Talk to your coworkers. Are there other mothers who have pumped breastmilk at work? Learn as much as you can from them. Is anyone else pregnant or breastfeeding? If so, consider a group meeting with your boss to make arrangements.
4. Talk to your human resources (HR) department if your employer has one. HR will know of any policies or programs that can help you combine working and breastfeeding. Some larger companies have an employee wellness program, an occupational nurse, or an employee relations program that may be able to support you in talking with your employer.
5. Before your meeting, practice what you plan to say to your employer with your friends or family. This will help you ease your nerves and be prepared.

“Remember that being a mom doesn't mean being perfect.

There's no such thing as perfection for any mom, so don't stress out about trying to achieve it.

Your love and your efforts will always be what count most to your baby.”

– BARB, NURSE PRACTITIONER



Talking to Your Boss

Now that you've gathered as much information as you can, you're ready to talk with your boss face-to-face or on the phone. (Take a deep breath. This conversation makes every mom nervous, but you're going to be fine!)

1. Discuss where you plan to pump. Page 10 has some great ideas for finding or creating private spaces to pump milk while at work.
2. Explain that you'll need time to pump. Most moms find they need two to three breaks per day to express their milk. We've included great tips on this topic on page 11.
3. Discuss where you'll store your milk. If there is an employee refrigerator, you can keep your milk there until you leave work at the end of each day. Or bring your own ice chest or insulated lunch cooler with ice packs. Check page 10 for storage tips.

Getting the Most Time for Maternity Leave

Were you tempted to skip this section because you didn't think you had many options for leave? We know. Working moms tend to rush back to work for many reasons, including stress about money. But time with your baby during these first weeks and months is special, and you deserve to take as much time as possible. So let's look at some ideas you might not have considered.

- Learn whether you are entitled to job protection during maternity leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 by visiting the U.S. Department of Labor's website at: dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.htm or by calling their toll-free information and helpline: 1-866-4-USWAGE (1-866-487-9243); TTY: 1-866-487-9243.
- Talk to your boss or HR department about your options. Let them know you'd like to take as long a maternity leave as possible. Ask them to explain what options are offered where you work.
- Consider asking your employer whether you can start back to work part time at first, job-share with another employee, telecommute, or work from home.
- Start back to work in the middle of your workweek. Having a short first week will help you and your baby adjust.
- If your employer is open to it, consider asking about bringing your baby to work. Or see whether you can arrange to have someone bring your baby to you during your break times. If your child-care provider is close enough, perhaps you can go there during your lunch break.

“Don't be shy to talk with your boss or manager. Do what you feel is right. Go for it! Don't feel ashamed.”

Start freezing some meals for yourself and your family, too! These will make mealtime easier and more relaxing when you start work.



Preparing Your Body, Your Mind, and Your Baby

Enjoy your time with your baby, but start preparing for your return to work. Doing so will make things easier for both of you. You don't have to do everything on this list; it is meant to be a helpful guide, not a source of stress!

- Breastfeed often to build up a good milk supply. Having a good milk supply will make pumping easier when you return to work.
- Be aware that for many new moms, breastfeeding can be difficult. That's OK. It's not about perfection, it's about persistence. It will get easier. Don't be afraid to ask for help from your WIC clinic, a lactation consultant, or the hospital where you gave birth.
- Enlist the support of friends and family. It's all right, and even necessary, to ask for help. Who can you count on? Talk to them, tell them your plan to breastfeed, and describe what you'll need to stick to your plan. Will you need help with dinner or help with child care? Ask for it.
- Remember that you don't have to be perfect to be a good mom. Do what you can and take one day at a time.
- When your baby is 2 to 6 weeks old, let another person start feeding your baby a bottle of breastmilk. This will help your baby get used to the bottle before you go back to work, and it will help you get used to pumping your breastmilk.
- Make sure that only others give your baby a bottle. When he or she is with you, your baby (and you!) should always enjoy the special bond of breastfeeding.
- Start pumping milk and building a supply of stored milk about two weeks before you return to work.
- Try to find a child-care provider who is close to your work and supports breastfeeding.
- Visit your child-care center a few times. Touch toys and items in the center. Your milk will build up immunities to germs in the child-care center to protect your baby.
- Before returning to work, take your baby to the child-care center to get him or her used to it.
- Have at least one practice run when you leave your baby with a caregiver who will feed with a bottle of breastmilk. Take this time to leave and do something special for yourself. Your baby might not take the bottle easily if you are in the same room.
- Visit breastmilkcounts.com for tips on pumping and storing milk.

“The first week or so may be tough, but it gets easier so quickly and it is so worth it. Just take it a day at a time.”

– KLAUDIA, MOTHER OF TWO. PLANS TO BREASTFEED FOR TWELVE MONTHS, BACK AT WORK FOR FOUR MONTHS.



What to Tell Your Child-Care Provider

The truth is, many child-care providers will already be familiar with breastmilk. However, we think it is helpful to discuss the following:

- Let your child-care provider know that you're breastfeeding and that it is important to you because it gives your baby the healthiest start.
- Explain that your milk will separate, leaving a layer of cream on top. Your care provider simply needs to swirl the milk gently to mix it up.
- Take a pillowcase or article of clothing with your scent on it to your baby's child-care provider. Have her place it under your baby's head during feedings. Your scent can be very calming to your baby.
- Explain that your milk can be warmed for a few minutes by placing the bag or bottle in a cup or bowl of hot water from the tap. Remind her that she should NEVER microwave your breastmilk.
- Let her know that you are using a slow-flow bottle and that it should take at least 15 minutes to feed your baby. Ask her to hold your baby on her lap in an upright (not lying back) position so that your baby can control the flow of the bottle.
- Inform her that breastfed babies usually eat smaller, more frequent meals. For instance, your baby will probably eat every two to three hours.
- Remind her to use the milk with the oldest date first. Tell her to throw away any milk that smells sour.
- Ask her not to feed your baby right before you arrive from work. You'll want to breastfeed your baby very soon after pick-up, and having a hungry baby makes this easier!
- Ask your child-care provider to learn more about supporting breastfeeding babies. A free online course from the Texas Department of State Health Services, Supporting Breastfeeding in the Child Care Setting, is available at: http://extensiononline.tamu.edu/courses/child_care.php.

Everything You Need to Know About Pumping at Work

An electric breast pump makes expressing your milk much faster and easier. Breastfeeding moms who are returning to work or school and are currently enrolled in WIC are eligible for free breast pumps from the WIC office. Be sure to read or watch a video about how to use your pump and to get the right size milk collection kit.

- Pumping shouldn't hurt. If you have any pain or difficulty with pumping, ask the WIC office or a lactation consultant for help.
- Don't wait until your breasts get full before you pump. Express every two to three hours if your baby is between birth to 6 months and every three to four hours if your baby is 6 months or older.
- Wash your hands before you hand-express or pump your milk.
- Looking at a picture of your baby, listening to a recording of your baby's voice, or thinking about nursing your baby can help you relax and start your milk flow.
- The amount of milk you pump is different than the amount of milk your body makes when you are feeding your baby. Your baby is better at getting the milk out than even the best pump! Hand-expressing for a minute or two before you pump and massaging your breast while you pump can help you make more milk.
- Put your breastmilk in clean bottles or breastmilk storage bags. For the first six months, store 2 to 5 ounces per bottle or bag.
- Once your baby starts eating solid foods, you may not need to store as many bags or bottles of milk.
- Label containers with the date pumped and your baby's name. (This will help your child-care provider keep track of your milk so that she can use the older milk first.)
- At work, store breastmilk in a cooler with ice packs or in the company refrigerator.
- Thaw frozen breastmilk in the refrigerator, under running water that is gradually warmed, or in a cup or bowl of warm water. *Never microwave breastmilk.*
- Visit the "Pumping at Work" section on breastmilkcounts.com.

"Resting and eating well really helps keep your milk supply up. My doctor told me that taking good care of myself is the exact same thing as taking care of my baby. That's really good advice."

– DANIELLE, FIRST-TIME MOM. BREASTFEEDING FOR FOUR MONTHS, BACK AT WORK FOR TWO MONTHS.

An electric, dual-sided breast pump will make pumping your milk much easier and faster.

Breastmilk Storage Guidelines

BREASTMILK STORAGE LOCATION	Best used within	Still safe to use within
Insulated cooler bag	24 hours	24 hours
Refrigerator	3 days	5 days
Freezer section inside a refrigerator	2 weeks	2 weeks
Freezer with separate door or deep freezer	6 months	12 months

Where to Pump at Work

Look for a private place. If there's not one, look around for a space that you are willing to use. The space can also be used for other things, but it should be available anytime that you need to use it.

Tips for using an office file room or storage closet: If the door doesn't lock, hang a sign outside the door when you are pumping or ask to have a lock installed.

Tips for using a cubicle: Use a shower curtain rod, a wooden dowel, or spring clamps from a hardware store to hang a large curtain around your cubicle when you need to pump.

Tips for creating a space: Room dividers or partitions can be used to make a quick pump room. You can even use a pop-up utility or shower tent if there are no other choices.

"I keep an extra set of pump parts at work. That way, if I forget something at home, I still have everything I need to get the job done."

– GRETCHEN, BREASTFEEDING AND WORKING MOTHER, AUSTIN, TX

Turn on a radio or fan if you are concerned about people hearing your pump.

When to Pump at Work: Planning a Schedule

You'll need to pump the same number of times that you have been breastfeeding at home. Usually this is every two to three hours.

Most moms will need to use their morning and afternoon break times and part of their lunch hour to express their milk. If you don't have usual break times, talk to your supervisor about scheduling times for milk-expression breaks.

With a double-sided electric pump, each pumping session will take about 15 to 20 minutes. You will also need to factor in time to get to and from the milk-expression space and to wash your hands and equipment.

A Typical Pumping Schedule for an 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Workday

7 a.m. Mom breastfeeds her baby just before heading to work.

10 a.m. Mom pumps milk during a mid-morning break.

12:30 p.m. Mom pumps milk during lunch.

3 p.m. Mom pumps during afternoon break.

5:30 p.m. Mom breastfeeds her baby at home or at child care.

"I keep an extra shirt and some breast pads at the office.

I've only had to use that shirt once, but I like knowing it's there just in case I leak."

– JULIE, MOTHER OF TWO. BREASTFEEDING FOR EIGHT MONTHS, BACK AT WORK FOR SIX MONTHS.

Ask whether your baby can have lunch with you.
If you can nurse and eat at the same time, you'll
be able to relax and not feel rushed.

Just in Case: How to Hand-Express Your Milk

Sometimes the unexpected happens. Your electric pump fails or you leave a part of the pump at home. On days like this, you'll be glad to know how to hand-express your milk. Plus, using hand-expression along with pumping can increase the amount of milk you are able to store for your baby. Here's how to do it:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Use a clean container with a wide opening to collect your milk. You can get a funnel that will attach to your bottle, but any clean container with a wide opening will work.
3. Place a warm washcloth on your breasts to help your milk flow.
4. Massage your breast to help increase the amount of milk you express. Do this by placing one hand under your breast for support. Apply gentle pressure, using a circular motion with your other hand. Massage from several starting points, always working from the chest toward the nipple. Gently shaking your breasts while leaning forward may also help to get your milk flowing.
5. Hold the clean container near your breast. With your other hand, place your fingers and thumb about one to two inches away from the base of your nipple. Press IN toward your ribs, SQUEEZE gently into the center of your breast, then RELAX your hand, and REPEAT. The milk will not flow quickly at first, but keep going and your milk should begin to drip.
6. Alternate between the right and left breast often, and rotate the placement of your fingers and thumb around your nipple to empty all areas of the breast. Expressing your milk gets easier with practice. Don't be discouraged if you can only express a small amount in the first few days.

If you have questions or need further instruction, you can view a hand-expression animation at: breastmilkcounts.com/educational-activities.html, or talk to a lactation consultant.

“Before I go to bed, I get everything ready for the next morning. I pack a lunch. I clean my breast pump and get it ready to take back to the office. It makes the mornings much easier.”

– AMANDA, FIRST-TIME MOM. BREASTFEEDING FOR SIX MONTHS, BACK AT WORK FOR THREE MONTHS.

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By supporting breastfeeding, employers reduce their health-care costs, lower absenteeism, improve employee morale, and increase productivity.

Good to Know: Breastfeeding, Your Job, and the Law

You are a lucky mom. It is now much easier to keep breastfeeding when you go back to work than it once was, and most employers are happy to give their breastfeeding employees the support they need. The law now requires employers to provide breaks and a private place for nursing mothers, but not all employees are covered by this law. That's why you should talk to your employer about your plans to express milk at work. It's also important to know the law, so here are some great facts:

What law protects a mother's right to express milk at work? As part of Health Reform, the U.S. government passed the Reasonable Break Time for Nursing Mothers amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act in 2010. It is a law that offers protections for many working moms so that they can continue to breastfeed even after they return to work.

Employers must provide:

- **A clean, private place**, other than a bathroom, to express breastmilk.
- **Reasonable break time** (usually unpaid) for you to express breastmilk each time you have the need to express milk at work. Most mothers will need to pump two to three times during the workday for 20-30 minutes.

It's easy to find out whether the law applies to you. Non-exempt employees are usually paid for each hour they work, and they are eligible for overtime pay any time they work more than 40 hours in a week.

Exempt employees are usually executive, managerial, or professional employees.

Check for your status on your pay/earnings statement or ask your employer to find out whether you are classified as exempt or non-exempt. If you are non-exempt, you are entitled to protection under this law.

If you have questions about whether your position should be classified as non-exempt or exempt, you can contact the U.S. Department of Labor.

What to do if you are classified as "exempt." If you are classified as exempt, your employer is not required by law to give you break time or space to pump. However, many employers will still allow you time and space to pump. It is very reasonable for you to expect to continue breastfeeding when you return to work. Follow the tips on page 5 on how to talk to your boss, and expect support.

For more information about your rights under the law, or for help, contact the U.S. Department of Labor. Call 1-866-487-9243 or visit dol.gov/whd/nursingmothers.



Ready, Set, Go: A Checklist for Returning to Work

Here's a quick list that includes the important steps discussed in this booklet. Use it to keep yourself on track as you prepare for a successful return to work.

- Three things I need to discuss with my supervisor. (See page 5.)
 1. Where I can express my milk in private. (Good ideas on page 10.)
 2. Flexible break schedule for pumping. (Details about planning your schedule on page 11.)
 3. Where I can store my milk at work. (Storage guidelines on page 10.)
- Figure out the longest maternity leave I can take. (See page 5 for ideas.)
- Decide how to return to work gradually. (Read page 5 for ideas.)
- Start preparing myself and my baby for my return to work. (Page 7 has great suggestions.)
- Get a breast pump. Electric, double-sided is best. (Talk to your WIC office.)
- Decide who will take care of my baby while I'm at work and talk to that person about giving my baby breastmilk. (See page 8.)
- Learn to hand-express my milk. (See page 12.)
- Learn how the law supports breastfeeding moms. (See page 13.)
- Make a list of names and numbers of people who support me. (Page 3 talks about building a support network.)

For sources, please visit TexasMotherFriendly.org/references.

The Texas Department of State Health Services asks businesses to help working mothers breastfeed for as long as they want.

To learn how to help your workplace become a designated Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite, visit TexasMotherFriendly.org.

For breastfeeding help and information, visit breastmilkcounts.com or call any of our breastfeeding hotlines:

Austin 1-800-514-6667

Houston 1-877-550-5008

Dallas 1-855-550-6667





