

Returning to Work



Transition Back Slowly

The first days back at work are always overwhelming, so starting with a short week will keep you from getting too tired

Practical tips to make the transition easier

The first days back to work can seem like a terrifying challenge. Follow a few of these tips, and the whole transition will be a lot easier for both you and your baby.

During pregnancy

Before you go on maternity leave, inform your employer about your decision to breastfeed, and find out what resources your workplace has (pump room, breast pumps, access to a lactation consultant, etc.). Talk with nursing co-workers and find out what routines they have established.

If your employer needs more information about offering breastfeeding support, please direct them to the North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition and/or share the following breastfeeding employer toolkit, which can be downloaded from: www.businessgrouphealth.org/benefitstopics/breastfeeding.cfm.

Take a practice day

Before your first day back to work, have a practice day. Get up at the time you would go to work, and duplicate the morning routine, leaving with your baby and bottles and lunch and all of the various things you'll need during the day.

Arrange for your baby to have a half-day with his care provider so you can practice leaving him for a short time. Then go home and try to duplicate your work schedule.

Pump when you would have breaks at work, and try to get by on only what you've packed (so you can figure out if you've forgotten anything). See if what you chose to wear works for pumping, or if it shows milk stains if you leak.

At the end of the day or half-day, see if you've pumped as much as your baby drank – if not, see if your care provider was pushing too many bottles, or maybe you'll need to pump more often.

It's good to find these things out before you're really at work.

Start with a short week

Arrange for your first week back to start on a Wednesday or Thursday. The first days back are always overwhelming, so starting with a short week will keep you from getting too tired.

It also gives you a chance to practice pumping for a couple of days, without the intimidation of a whole week looming ahead of you.

A typical schedule

Your schedule will need to adjust to your particular work situation, but you can start from this sample schedule:

6:00 am: Wake up and nurse your baby. Shower, dress, eat a healthy breakfast, pump if you need to.



www.ncbfc.org

7:30 am: Leave for work with your baby

8:00 am: Drop off baby at daycare, talk about your baby's needs with your care provider

8:15 am: Nurse your baby before you leave

8:45 am: Arrive at work (this can be another time to pump, if needed)

10:00 am: First pumping break

12:30 pm: Lunch and second pumping break

3:00 pm: Third pumping break

5:00 pm: Leave to pick up your baby

5:30 pm: Arrive at childcare, nurse your baby and discuss baby's day

6:00 pm: Arrive home, eat dinner

7:30 pm: Nurse your baby and put him or her to bed

8:00 pm: Clean pump parts, get bottles ready for the next day, pack your own lunch and get out the next day's dinner from the freezer

10:00 pm: Go to bed. You may want to wake your baby to nurse before you sleep, or pump before bed if your baby sleeps through.

Diaper bag (if your baby is cared for outside your home)

- Extra outfits (2 changes)
- Diapers and wipes
- (Pacifier)

Your stuff

- Extra clothing (blouse, sweater, in case of leaks – can leave at work)
- Breast pads
- Your lunch – pack what you can the night before, include high protein healthy snacks
- Office stuff – briefcase, backpack, tote bag - whatever you'll need for actually working

In the morning

- Put freezer packs in pump bag
- Bottles from fridge to diaper bag or cooler pack
- Don't forget your lunch
- Eat a good breakfast
- Don't forget your bag of office stuff!
- Bus pass, pocket money, coffee mug or whatever else makes you feel like a civilized adult as you leave home
- Nurse your baby before you leave

Checklist For A Day At Work

On the night before:

- Put freezer packs (blue ice) for your pump bag or cooler pack into the freezer
- Put any milk from the freezer into the fridge to thaw overnight
- Prepare any baby foods if your baby is taking solids
- Pack your pump bag
- Clean bottles (one bottle for each pumping session plus 1) WITH lids
- The little parts - valves, membranes, etc.
- Flanges and flange inserts
- Power supply (don't leave it in the wall!)
- Paper towels
- Photo of your baby

Visit www.workandpump.com for more information.