



BREASTFEEDING AS A WORKING MOM

With a little preparation and planning, you can do it!



You may be wondering how you can breastfeed and go back to work. WIC is here to help you make it happen!

With planning and preparation, you can continue to breastfeed once you return to the workplace. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends women breastfeed their infants for at least one year.

This booklet will help you plan your return to work or school as a breastfeeding mom.

"I'm glad that I pumped my breastmilk even after going back to work. I was able to meet my goal of breastfeeding my daughter until she turned 1 year old. It was hard at first but after I had a routine going, it was more doable."

Noemi, mom of 1



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BREASTFEEDING
is worth the effort.

WIC's expert breastfeeding support includes lactation consultants, peer counselors, breastfeeding classes and a statewide hotline. WIC clients get healthy food, too!

WIC can help.
Start your application online at
TexasWIC.org



Before your baby arrives

Planning for breastfeeding at work or school can start before your baby arrives!

Research breast pumps

Before your due date, call your health insurance to ask about the supplies available to you. If you have any trouble getting a pump from your health insurance company, let WIC know.



Talk to...

- **Your WIC peer counselor.** She is a mother experienced in breastfeeding and has been trained to help you meet your breastfeeding goals.
- **Your co-workers.** You may find other mothers who have pumped and may have tips for you. Can you talk about your plans with somebody else who is pregnant or breastfeeding?
- **Your friends or family.** Find out if they have experience with breastfeeding while working or attending school and ask for their advice.

Know your rights

The law protects your right to breastfeed after you return to work. Most employers must provide a clean, private place other than a bathroom, and reasonable break time (usually unpaid) for you to pump your breastmilk.

Work with your employer to make a plan for your return:

- **Talk to your human resources (HR) department** about any policies or programs that will help you to pump at work.
- **Schedule a meeting** with your supervisor to discuss your return and the specific points below:
 - **Plan maternity leave.** Arrange for as much time off as you can before you return to work.
 - **Ask for flexibility.** Can you start back to work part-time at first? Is there flexibility in your work hours? Can you telecommute or work from home?
 - **Locate a place** where you can pump and store your milk at work. Find a space to pump with a lock or a privacy sign that you can use when needed.
 - **Work out a schedule** for breaks to pump when you return. Most mothers will need to pump 2-3 times during the work day for 20-30 minutes each. See if you can start early or stay late to avoid having to use unpaid time.



Before returning to work

While on leave

- **Breastfeed often** when you and your baby are together to build up your milk supply.
- **Make sure you have a breast pump.** If you have any problems getting or using a breast pump, call your WIC office for help.
- **Learn how to hand express your milk.** View our hand-expression tutorial at [BreastmilkCounts.com](https://www.breastmilkcounts.com) or talk to your WIC peer counselor.
- **Find a childcare provider that supports breastfeeding.**
- **Introduce the bottle** to your baby around 4 weeks of age or 1-2 weeks before returning to work or school, whichever is sooner.



2 weeks before you return to work

- **Begin pumping and storing your milk** once a day for 2 weeks. This should give you plenty of milk stored in the freezer for when you go back to work.
- **Make a plan to store and carry pumped milk** once you return to work. At work, store breastmilk in a cooler with frozen ice packs or in the company refrigerator in a labeled bag.
- **Have a practice run.** Leave your baby with a caregiver who feeds him with a bottle of breastmilk. It may be more difficult that your baby take the bottle if you are in the same room.
- **Make a pumping plan** for work with your WIC lactation consultant or peer counselor.

Sample Pumping Schedule		Your Pumping Plan (Occasion, Time / Breastfeed or Pump)	
Before work	Breastfeed		
Break	Pump		
Lunch	Pump		
Break	Pump		
After work	Breastfeed		

- **Talk to your supervisor.** Review your plans for where and when you will pump during the work day. If possible, start back to work in the middle of your work week to help you and your baby adjust.
- **Take it one day at a time** and be willing to try new ways to make breastfeeding a success.

While working

- **Nurse your baby right before work or school,** and ask your childcare provider to feed her 2 hours before you pick her up so that you can nurse soon after.
- **Relax.** Before pumping, take a few deep breaths and think about your baby. You can bring a photo or a recording of your baby's coos to help you get your milk flowing.
- **Store your milk** in clean bottles or breastmilk storage bags. Keep them in a cooler with frozen ice packs or in a labeled bag in the company refrigerator.

You have support

Talk to your WIC peer counselor or lactation consultant right away if you have any problems or questions. Many breastfeeding moms need time to adjust to going back to work. Most challenges can be overcome with planning and help.

If you need help getting what you need at work

Call the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division helpline at 1-866-4 USWAGE (1-866-487-9243) to find out if your workplace is complying with the laws that protect your rights.

Locating a space to pump in your workplace

- Talk to your employer and look for a private space to pump.
- Create a space in your workplace that is available anytime. This can be an office space, a converted closet or a storage area. The space must be private, provide easy access to electric outlets and have space for a comfortable chair and a table for the breast pump.



Scan the QR code to learn more.

Maintaining your milk supply

- Breastfeed whenever your baby is hungry to build up your milk supply.
- Pump or hand express at work or school the same number of times your baby would have breastfed.
- Try to add more breastfeeding or pumping sessions while at home if you see a decrease in your milk supply.



"Try to build up your breastmilk freezer supply the best you can. It will come in handy when you are preparing bottles for day care or working late."

Robyn, mom of 1

Breastmilk storage guide

Storing breastmilk

- Store about **2-4 ounces** of breastmilk per bottle or bag so you are less likely to waste unfinished milk
- **Label containers** with the date pumped and your baby's name.
- Once your baby starts solid foods, the amount you need to store may decrease.

Using stored breastmilk

- Think of breastmilk as a food, not a body fluid. It does not need special handling.
- Use the oldest milk first. If your stored breastmilk smells sour, throw it out.
- Thaw frozen breastmilk under warm running water, or place in a cup or bowl of warm water for a few minutes. Never microwave breastmilk. Use breastmilk within 24 hours of thawing.
- Your milk will separate and have a cream layer on top. Simply swirl the milk to mix it up. Breastmilk may vary in color. This is normal too.
- Plan to have enough breastmilk for your baby to eat every 2-3 hours when separated from you during the first 6 months.
- If your baby struggles to take a bottle, reach out to your WIC lactation consultant or peer counselor for tips.

Breastmilk Storage Guidelines		
Location	Use Within	Temperature
Countertop	4 hours	Up to 77° F (25° C). (Room Temperature)
Insulated cooler bag	24 hours	Keep ice packs in contact with milk containers. Limit opening the cooler bag.
Refrigerator	4 days	At or below 40° F (4° C)
Freezer section in fridge	2 weeks*	At or below 5° F (-15° C)
Freezer with separate door	6 months*	0° F (-18° C)
Deep freezer	12 months*	At or below -4° F (-20° C)

* Use frozen breastmilk within 24 hours of thawing.



Where can I find support?

Texas Lactation Support Hotline 24/7:
855-550-6667 | BreastmilkCounts.com

My peer counselor: _____

Phone number: _____

My WIC clinic: _____

Phone number: _____

Texas Lactation Support Centers:

Austin: Mom's Place

512-972-6700

Dallas: Lactation Care Center

214-670-7222

Houston: The Lactation Foundation

713-500-2800, option 1

McAllen: Lactation Care Center RGV

956-292-7711

San Antonio: Lactation Support Center

210-207-7138

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

For breastfeeding help and information visit **BreastmilkCounts.com** or call the
Texas Lactation Support Hotline 24/7 at 855-550-6667.



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