

MAYBE BABY



1325 S. Cliff Ave. | Sioux Falls, SD 57105

AveraWomens.org

Breastfeeding Support Services
605-322-4490

Breastfeeding And The Workplace

A MOTHER'S GUIDE

As more mothers go back to work soon after their babies are born, they wonder about how to balance work and breastfeeding. This guide can help you plan for breastfeeding once you return to work.



Explore your options during your pregnancy

Learn about your company's maternity leave policies, figure out how long you will be out, and if it will be with or without pay after the baby is born.

- The older the baby is when you return, the less you will need to pump your milk during the day.
- Learn if you can go back on a part-time or flex-time schedule or if there is a job-sharing plan. This way you don't have to work as many hours at first and can gradually get used to being back.

Ask what arrangements your company has made to accommodate the new federal provisions for expressing breastmilk during the workday. Provisions include:

- Flexible time during the day
- A clean, private and quiet place
- A place to store your breastmilk

Talk to other breastfeeding working moms to see what they did. Consider a support group at work.

Look at your current job and see how breastfeeding can fit in.

- Look for times in your current schedule that could be used for nursing or pumping, like morning or afternoon breaks and lunchtimes. See if your employer will let you work earlier or later so you can have longer breaks during the day.

Find a place at work to nurse or express your milk.

- If the baby will be at an on-site or nearby child care center, you may be able to go and nurse during the day. Your child care provider also may be able to bring the baby to you on your breaks.
- Use a "Do Not Disturb" sign to help ensure privacy.

Give your employer feedback. Let your supervisor know your satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the system, and encourage him or her to keep helping you.

Other Tips

Many areas in your life will change when you have a new baby. Learning to breastfeed and work are part of those changes. Once a routine is established it will get easier. Don't be too hard on yourself – give yourself and your family time to settle into your new life.

Give yourself time to rest. Consider a nap when you get home. Get other family members or friends to make meals, clean house or do laundry. Cut down on your activities and things that do not need to get done. You and your baby are most important – let other people help take care of you.

If you have questions or problems with breastfeeding after you go back to work, call Avera McKennan Breastfeeding Support Services at 605-322-4490 for help.

If you want to learn more, read "Of Cradles and Careers: A Guide to Reshaping Your Job to Include a Baby In Your Life," by Kaye Lowman, or "The Working Woman's Guide to Breastfeeding," by Nancy Dana and Anne Price. They may be available at your local bookstore or library.

The period of time you will be breastfeeding is short compared to your entire working career. The long-term benefits of a healthy and happy child are worth the short-term extra effort for you and your employer.

Breastfeeding when you return to work

Try to go back to work mid-week or late in the week. Keep a light schedule or work shorter hours if possible. This will make you less tired and less worried about being away from your baby.

Get up a little early so you can nurse the baby (even if you both are still sleepy). Then the baby will be happy while you get ready for the day. Try to nurse again just before you leave home or when dropping the baby off at the child care provider.

Express your breastmilk on your “usual” schedule. Have pictures of your baby, a blanket or a toy to remind you of your baby. This can help you relax and make it easier to express milk.

Store breastmilk in small amounts, 2 to 4 ounces, for a young baby. Label the bottle with the baby’s name and the date so the child care provider knows who the milk is for and how fresh it is. It might be convenient to run a sheet of labels on your computer and then just add the date and time. Fresh milk should be stored within six hours and used within seven days.

Wear two-piece outfits to make pumping or nursing easier. If you leak milk, try to express more often, use nursing pads inside your bra or press gently against your nipples to stop the leak. Wear clothing with a pattern, a sweater or a jacket to hide leak marks.

Nurse again when you pick the baby up from the child care provider or when you get home. Relaxing together for the first 30 minutes can refresh you and keep your baby happy.

Breastfeed when you’re with the baby to keep up your milk supply – mornings, evenings and weekends.

Drink plenty of fluids like water and juice during the day. Limit caffeine drinks like coffee, tea or colas to two drinks a day.

As your baby gets older and starts eating other foods, you may not need to pump as often during the day.

- You will want a place that is quiet, private, clean and has a comfortable chair. This could be a private office, storeroom, women’s lounge, health service office or athletic facility. A nearby sink is very useful.
- All companies with more than 50 employees must accommodate breastfeeding mothers with a specific place set aside for pumping and/or feeding an infant. Ask the personnel manager or health nurse for arrangements in your company.

Plan a way to store your milk.

- Keep the bottles of milk in the employee refrigerator. Put them in a box or container labeled with your name. This will protect the milk from spilling, getting lost or being thrown out.
- Use ice packs with a small cooler, ice chest or thermos to store your breastmilk in your locker or other safe storage area.

Discuss your ideas and plans with your employer before you have your baby.

- See how well they fit with your employer’s policies.
- If your employer doesn’t have a policy, see if your plan is acceptable given the current work environment.
- Remind your employer of the long-term benefits of breastfeeding compared with your short-term needs to keep pumping.

Some moms find it impossible to arrange a system for nursing or expressing during the day. These moms nurse when they are at home with the baby and have the child care provider give formula during the day.

Prepare yourself during maternity leave

Give yourself time to get to know your baby, yourself and how breastfeeding works. The more comfortable you feel with breastfeeding, the easier it will be once you return to work.

Wait for three weeks to give your baby a bottle of breastmilk. By this time, breastfeeding becomes easier. Give a bottle every once in a while so the baby learns how to drink from it. Have someone else besides you give the bottle. An older baby could be given breastmilk directly from a cup. Express your breastmilk every time the baby takes a bottle so you keep up with your own supply.

Nurse in different places so you will feel more comfortable nursing or expressing milk (away from home, at work, at the child care provider).

Keep track of the times your baby usually wants to breastfeed, so you can try to express milk or nurse about the same time once you have gone back to work. This will help you feel more comfortable and keep you from feeling too full or leaking.

Find a child care provider who will support your plans for breastfeeding and is near your work.

Learn how to express your breastmilk by hand. This can help with your own comfort as your body learns to make milk. Some women are able to express as much milk by hand as they can using the pump.

If you use a pump, choose one that is best for your needs. Check with your insurance company to see if they make any provisions to cover the purchase or rental of a breastpump.

Double Electric Personal-Use Pumps

Combining the efficiency of hospital-grade pumps and the convenience of portability, top-end electric pumps are a popular choice for moms who return to work full-time. These pumps are fully automatic, with quick cycling times, adjustable suction levels and double-pumping capability. Some models are designed to mimic a baby's sucking and have multiple sucking patterns.

Hospital Electric Breast Pump

If you're pumping constantly throughout the day, perhaps because you are separated from your infant or your baby is not able to breastfeed, you might benefit from the most efficient pump: a heavy duty hospital grade model. A hospital pump is available for your use while you or your baby are patients at Avera McKennan Hospital.

Mid-Range Electric or Battery Pumps

These pumps are best for short-term separations of less than eight hours for only a few days. They are portable and affordable. However, they generally take longer to use and require more effort than the double electric pumps. Many allow you to pump only one breast at a time and even the double pump has long cycling times, about 12-20 sucks per minute, compared to 50-60 for the hospital-grade pump.

Manual Pumps

Manual pumps require you to pump a piston or squeeze a lever to create the suction to empty your breast. These pumps empty only one breast at a time and may require two hands to operate. While hand pumps are generally more affordable, smaller, lighter and quieter than electric pumps they are also slow. It depends on how quickly you can squeeze the pump handle and this can get very tiring for the hands.

If you have questions about rental or purchase of these pumps, they are available at medical supply outlets such as the Avera Living Well Store.

Fresh breastmilk can be refrigerated safely for seven days. Breastmilk may be safely frozen for six months in a combination refrigerator/freezer. Do not store milk inside the freezer door. Store milk in the amounts your baby usually takes for a single feeding – try 2-ounce amounts for a young baby.

One week before you return to work, start to practice.

- If you haven't started pumping yet, begin expressing milk at the same times you will pump at work. This gives you a chance to learn how to use the pump, how long it will take and how your body feels. It also will help you build up an extra supply of stored breastmilk.
- Visit your child care provider and leave the baby for some short periods. This lets you, the provider and the baby get used to each other. Let the provider know your baby's usual feeding times so he or she can feed at that time. You may want to make a whole day trial run a few days before you go back to work to see how things go.