



Australian
Breastfeeding
Association

Breastfeeding and work plan

Returning to work after having a baby often brings many questions about both breastfeeding and expressing breastmilk. Whether you're coming back from maternity leave or starting a new job, and whether you're working from home, at a work site or a mix of both, it's common to look for guidance.

Below, you'll find questions along with helpful information and resources to support your transition back to work.

How can I continue breastfeeding when I return to work?

- **Flexible schedule:** Plan your workday around your baby's feeding schedule as much as possible. Try breastfeeding in the morning before you leave and as soon as you return home.
- **On-site feeding:** If your baby's childcare is close to your workplace, you might be able to visit and breastfeed during breaks.

How do I express breast milk at work?

- **Finding time and space:** Discuss with your employer a private, comfortable space to express milk and schedule regular breaks to pump.
- **Equipment:** Invest in a good quality breast pump and consider whether renting or buying is the best option for you.
- **Storage:** Plan for storing and transporting expressed milk safely at work, using a cooler bag or workplace refrigerator.

Tips and tricks from other mums

- Before returning to work, do a few trial runs to practice your morning routine, including feeding or expressing.
- Choose work clothes that make breastfeeding or expressing easier, such as tops that provide easy access.
- If you are worried about leaking milk, keep an extra set of breast pads and a spare top at work in case of leaks. Having these items on hand can help you feel more secure and confident.
- Simplify routines at home to make mornings smoother and ensure you have everything you need for work and breastfeeding.
- Pack a bag with your equipment. Having everything ready will make your mornings smoother.
- Take care of yourself by eating well, staying hydrated and resting whenever possible.
- If you plan to express at work, practice timing your sessions to match your workday breaks. This helps you know how long each session will take and how much milk you can express.
- Prepare for your first day back at work at the end of the week on either a Thursday or Friday.
- Incorporate small self-care practices into your day, such as short walks, relaxing baths or moments of mindfulness.



Breastfeeding and work checklist

Before birth

Educate and prepare

Breastfeeding class: Attend a Breastfeeding Education Class to gain knowledge and skills. My partner or a support person is welcome.

Join the Australian Breastfeeding Association: Becoming a member to access resources, including informative materials and local support groups.

Communicate with my partner and support circle

Open discussions: Talk with my partner or support circle about the importance of breastfeeding and how they will be able to support it.

Work and breastfeeding plans: Discuss my intention to combine breastfeeding with work.

Plan maternity leave

Leave duration: Determine the maximum maternity leave available and assess how long I will take off based on my goals and financial situation.

Childcare arrangements

Research options: Explore childcare options for the one that best fits our family's needs and sign up to a service.

Employer engagement

Return-to-work policy: Speak with my employer about their policies supporting breastfeeding employees.

Inform employer: Inform my manager or HR department about my plan to combine breastfeeding with work.

Two months before returning to work

Expressing breastmilk

Plan for expressing: If necessary, plan how to express breastmilk at work.

Employer confirmation

Return date: Confirm my return-to-work date with my employer and discuss lactation break details.

Breast pump decision

Select pump: Decide whether I need a breast pump, either to hire or buy.

One month before returning to work

Wardrobe preparation

Work clothes: Review my work clothes to select outfits suitable for breastfeeding or expressing milk.

Home organisation

Simplify routines: Think about ways to organise and simplify things at home to ease the transition back to work.

One week before returning to work

Practice routine

Morning schedule: Do a full practice run of my work morning routine.

Milk estimation

Baby's needs: If I plan to express, estimate how much milk my baby will need and plan how the milk will be fed to my baby.

Work/life balance:

Strategies: Implement strategies to maintain a healthy work/life balance and ensure self-care.

Did you know the Australian Breastfeeding Association has an accreditation for Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces?

We offer accreditation for Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces, ensuring supportive environments with facilities for expressing milk and lactation breaks for breastfeeding mothers, enhancing the overall experience for working mums and their babies.



Breastfeeding
Friendly
Workplace

An Australian Breastfeeding Association Initiative

The Australian Breastfeeding Association is a registered training organisation and receives funding from the Australian Government. RTO: 21659.

Learn more

breastfeeding.asn.au/workplace

