

Returning to Work Lactation Checklist

It's understandable to feel overwhelmed by the prospect of returning to work or school and continuing to breastfeed. Just like you devised a labor and delivery plan, outlining a breastfeeding plan for returning to work will maximize your success. Take things one day at a time and take an advantage of the resources that you have.

Plan Ahead at Work

Talk with your supervisor before beginning Maternity Leave. If you plan to continue breastfeeding when you return, work with your supervisor/manager for any lactation accommodation you may need.

Take as much leave time as you can and continue to talk with your supervisor/manager after you return to work to evaluate what's working and what isn't. Consider returning to work part-time or begin working on a short week (e.g., Wednesday or Thursday). That way, your first week back at work doesn't feel so long.

Be sure to pack all needed supplies and self-care items such as personal pump, attachments, cleaning supplies, sealable plastic bags, bra pads, extra shirt, pictures/videos of baby, etc.

Plan Ahead at Home

Four to six weeks prior to your return to work, start collecting one bottle of breast milk, per day. Set a total goal of 24-32 oz. to have on "reserve". Leave your pump station set-up for pumping.

- Whenever your baby nurses one side, but not the other--pump that other side
- If your baby takes a long nap, try to pump in the middle
- Pump one side while the baby nurses the other
- Pump one hour after baby goes to bed/after the first breastfeeding of the morning

Your baby is the best pump. Nurse your baby whenever you are at home – at night, in the morning, and on the weekends. Breastfeeding is a wonderful way to reunite with your baby physically and emotionally when you return home from work. A nursing marathon over the weekend is usually all a mom really needs to get a supply back up by Monday.

Try Maintaining Your Pumping Time Schedule

For some women, skipping a pumping time three days in a row can drastically reduce their milk supply. Regular pumping keeps your milk supply up. The more you pump, or feed, the more milk you will produce.

- Ideally, a nursing mom who is away from her baby for 6-8 hours should plan to pump as often as she would feed her baby during that time, about 3 times. Realistically, that may amount to 2 times during her absence.

For additional resources and support, visit the UCI HR Wellness Website at hr.uci.edu/wellness