Breastfeeding Tips for Moms

During Pregnancy

- Pregnancy is the best time to prepare for breastfeeding and returning to work!
- Attend prenatal classes available at your hospital, workplace, private physician clinic and or one of the FREE classes with a board certified lactation consultant through Healthy Carolina’s Lactation Support Initiative.
- Attend La Leche League meetings to learn more about how to combine breastfeeding and employment.
- Talk with your supervisor to discuss your plans to breastfeed and find out where the nearest Nursing Mother’s Lounge on USC’s campus is to your office.

During The First Weeks After Delivery

- Get a good start in the hospital by putting your baby to the breast within the first hour after birth, and at least 8-12 times every 24 hours. This will help you establish a good milk supply for when you return to work. Your first milk (colostrum) is packed with antibodies that help protect your baby from illness.
- Your milk is perfect for your baby’s needs, even though it may seem you are not making much the first few days. Your baby’s stomach is very small at first (only the size of a large marble!) and only holds 1-2 teaspoons, so the baby doesn’t need much! Between days 2-5 your body will begin making larger volumes of milk.
- Expect engorgement. A new mother usually produces lots of milk, making the breasts temporarily big and sometimes painful. Feeding the baby often will help relieve the engorgement.
- Ask the hospital for names of people you can call if you have questions about breastfeeding.
- Watch for signs that your baby is getting plenty of milk. By day five, your baby should have around four to six wet diapers and three to four yellow, seedy stools every 24 hours.
- Avoid using bottles or pacifiers for the first 3-4 weeks as this may decrease your milk supply. A lactation consultant can help you know you are making plenty of milk.
- If you and your baby need to be apart, you can express your milk manually or with a breast pump to keep up your milk supply, and refrigerate or freeze your milk to give to your baby later.
- The first few weeks after childbirth are a learning time for you and your baby. Use these important weeks to rest and take care of yourself and your baby.
**During Maternity Leave**

- Take as many weeks off as you can. Ideally, you will be able to take off work at least six weeks to recover from childbirth and establish strong breastfeeding techniques. Twelve weeks is even better.

- Focus on your baby during this time and make time to rest 20-30 minutes every few hours. Housework can wait or be taken on by family and friends.

- Practice expressing your milk by hand or with a quality breast pump, and freeze 1-2 ounces at a time to save for your baby after you return to work. This also helps you build a greater milk supply. Pick times of the day when you seem to have the most milk. Some women express milk during or after their baby nurses since the milk has already “let down” and flows easily.

- Be patient with yourself! It takes time for both you and your baby to adjust to your new lives together. Follow your baby’s cues for when and how long to breastfeed, and enjoy this special time together!

- Help your baby adjust to taking breast milk from a bottle before you return to work.

- Talk with your family and your childcare provider about your progress, questions, and intent to continue breastfeeding, and let them know you are counting on their support and help.

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**Transitioning Back to Work**

Returning to work gradually can help your body and your baby adjust to the change in schedule. Some tips on gradually starting back to work include:

- Start back part-time for a brief period before working full-time.

- Work from home or combine working from home and at work.

- Go back to work on a Thursday or Friday or just before you have one to two days off. This gives you and your baby a shorter period to adjust to being away from each other before you go back full time.

- Take Wednesdays (or another day that fits your schedule) off for a few weeks and breastfeed on your baby’s schedule to rebuild your milk supply.

- Consider using childcare close to work so you can breastfeed your baby, if feasible, based on your work schedule.

- When you arrive to pick up your baby from childcare, take time to breastfeed first. This will give you both time to reconnect before traveling home and returning to other family responsibilities.
Pumping at Work

A high-quality electric breast pump may be your best strategy for efficiently expressing milk during the workday. Contact your local hospital, or public health department to find where to buy or rent a pump and call your insurance company to see what types of rental pumps they will cover.

Find out where the nearest nursing mothers’ lounge is at USC by visiting Healthy Carolina’s website. When using one of the lounges, feel free to bring photos or baby items to help with let down, which will help you to finish pumping quicker.

Express milk for 10-15 minutes approximately two to three times during a typical eight-hour work period. Remember that in the first months of life babies need to breastfeed 8-12 times in 24 hours. So you need to express and store milk during those usual feeding times when you are away from your baby. This will maintain a sufficient amount of milk for your childcare provider to feed your baby. The number of times you need to express milk should be equal to the number of feedings your baby needs. As the baby gets older, the number of feeding times may decrease. When babies are around 6 months old and begin solid foods, they often need to feed less often.

Storing Your Milk

Because your milk is full of antibodies that fight germs and bacteria, it can be safely stored and given to the baby later. Breast milk is food, so it is safe to keep in an employee refrigerator or a cooler with ice packs. Discuss with your supervisor the best place for you to store your milk. If you work in a medical department, do not store milk in the same refrigerators where medical specimens are kept. Be sure to label the milk container with your name and the date you expressed the milk.

Supplies for Pumping at Work

- Cooler with ice packs if no refrigerator is available
- Breast pump
- Breastmilk storage bags or bottles
- Sanitizing wipes to clean breast pump
- Bra pads in case of leakage
- An extra shirt in case of leakage
- Reusable water bottle to stay hydrated
- A photo of your baby or a recording of their voice to help with milk let-down

The U.S. Office on Women’s Health recommends the following storage times and temperatures for breast milk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storage Type</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>Time Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thawed breast milk</td>
<td>60-85°F</td>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room temperature</td>
<td>60-85°F</td>
<td>3-4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small cooler with ice-pack</td>
<td>30°F or colder</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>0°F or colder</td>
<td>3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freezer</td>
<td>0°F or colder</td>
<td>6 months</td>
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Adapted from the D.H.H.S. publication “The Employees’ Guide to Breastfeeding and Working”

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