

Back To Work or School Breastfeeding Plan

Wisconsin law protects a Mother's Right to Breastfeed (statute 253.16) in public and private places. Also, the Fair Labor Standards Act requires most employers to provide reasonable break time and a private space for non-exempt employees who need to express breastmilk (for the first year after the child's birth). For more details, contact the St. Croix County Public Health Department at 715-246-8263.

3-4 weeks before returning to work/school:

- Get familiar with your breast pump. Make sure that you know how to work it, and clean it properly.
- Talk with supervisor/school nurse about your plans to return to work/school and learn about their available breastfeeding/pumping support. (Place to pump, break schedule...)

2 weeks before returning to work/school:

- Start pumping. While you are with baby, find one or two times each day to pump after breastfeeding. Freeze this breastmilk and thaw the day before returning to work/school.
- You can offer occasional feedings of breastmilk in a bottle or cup (depending on age) to help your baby transition. Pump in place of that feeding to keep up your milk supply.
- Visit place of employment/school talk with supervisor/school nurse and review your plans to pump and find a comfortable place to pump.
- Arrange for a "trial-run".
- Bring baby to caregiver and visit place of employment/school. Have your caregiver feed your baby expressed breastmilk.
- While away from your baby, try to pump as often as your baby would feed. Try to double pump (both breasts at the same time) for 10-15 minutes. If you do not have enough time to fully empty your breasts, it is better to pump for a short period than to not pump at all. It is ideal to have regular stimulation (pumping or baby at breast) and emptying of the breast to maintain a good milk supply.

The day before returning to work/school:

- Prepare by thawing milk for the following day. Set out clothing for you and baby. Pack diaper bag. Pack your lunch and a bottle of water. Bring nursing pads with you (even mothers who do not normally leak, may leak while away from their babies.) Set all things out along with your breast pump to make your morning go as smooth as possible.

The first day back to work/school: (If possible, start back with a shorter week.)

- If unable to breastfeed before you leave, try to take time to pump. Take regular pumping breaks while you are away from your baby, as explained for the "trial run".
- Remember to be patient with yourself and your baby. Continuing to breastfeed when you go back to work/school is great, even though it may not seem like the easiest choice at first. Things will get better... hang in there! Talk to family and friends and find the support you need. Take time to think about your day and how it went. Make some adjustments and prepare for success. It may take a week or two, but before you know it both you and baby will become pros!