

# GET UP & GROW

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD



## Breastfeeding and returning to work



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing



Returning to work does not mean that you can no longer breastfeed your baby. Continuing to breastfeed can be something special for you and your baby to share, as you both get used to a new routine. If your baby is a few months old and breastfeeding well, they will quite often be happy on a mixed feeding plan of breastfeeds combined with breastmilk offered from a bottle or cup.

You can continue to breastfeed in the morning and evening (or more often depending on your working hours), and provide expressed breastmilk for when you are at work. Expressing breastmilk even when you are away from your baby will keep up your milk supply, and give you a supply of milk to use for times you are away.

## Expressing breastmilk

Breastmilk can be expressed by hand, with a hand pump or with an electric pump. Whatever you decide, practise expressing milk before you start back at work, and get some help if needed. Express in a routine similar to your usual breastfeeding routine.

Make sure that your baby can bottle-feed, or offer a cup if your baby is older than seven or eight months. If it is hard to get your baby to start bottle-feeding, have a few trial runs before they start care, with someone else offering the bottle.

If you do not want to express milk, or after a while find that it is getting too difficult, continue breastfeeding morning and evening and offer formula during the day. If breastfeeding is well-established, many mothers can continue to provide enough milk for these less frequent breastfeeds.

**‘Continuing to breastfeed can be something special for you and your baby to share...’**

## Breastfeeding when back at work

Express a little extra breastmilk at the end of each feed for a day or two before going back to work. Store a supply in the refrigerator or freezer at home, and make sure you have enough milk to send with your baby to the early childhood setting.

Talk to your early childhood setting, as they will help you to manage this new feeding routine. They will also tell you their policies regarding any breastmilk brought to the setting.

When providing breastmilk to the setting, make sure it is in sterilised plastic bottles, ready for feeding. Carry the bottles in an insulated container with a freezer brick, and make sure the bottles are clearly labelled, with a waterproof label or pen, with the full name of your child and the date.



## Checklist for preparing your return to work

- Ask your workplace about where you can express breastmilk, access a refrigerator for storing your breastmilk, and whether you can take short breaks whenever you need to express milk.
- Practise expressing milk with your chosen method.
- Make sure your baby will take a bottle (or can drink from a cup, if old enough).
- Make sure you have at least a two-day supply of bottles – one day's worth to express milk into, one day's worth to send with your baby to the early childhood setting, and perhaps some extras (you may have extra milk, which you can freeze for another time).
- Purchase two insulated containers and freezer bricks – one for putting milk in for the early childhood setting and one for bringing your expressed milk home from work.
- Remember, if you are breastfeeding, the safest option is not to drink alcohol and keep baby away from cigarette smoke.



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For further help and advice

Raising Children Network  
[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

Australian Breastfeeding Association  
1800 MUM 2 MUM (1800 686 2 686)  
[www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)

[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

All information in this publication is correct as at April 2013