

Why balance breastfeeding and employment

Babies who are breastfed are healthy - a healthy baby means less time missed at work as well as less cost for health care.

Breastfeeding means you get to sit down and relax with your baby when you come home - while someone else makes the dinner.

Replacements for breast milk cost money - money you could use for other things.

Breastfeeding means you can feed the baby at night without moving from your warm bed - more rest for mother.

Breastfeeding means no formula to shop for and no bottles to make - more time.

Women who breastfeed for a few months have less risk of getting breast cancer.

Breastfeeding benefits the employer too - less time off work, less staff turnover.



How to balance breastfeeding and employment

It depends on your job and what hours you work. In general, consider:

- ◇ Can you take more leave so your baby is around six months old and taking some foods/fluids in addition to breastfeeding?
- ◇ Is there childcare near your work so you can feed the baby as needed during work time? Some mothers eat their lunch at the childminders while feeding the baby.
- ◇ Can you express your milk at work if you are not able to be with your baby?
- ◇ Could your childminder bring the baby to you at work?
- ◇ Can you work flexible hours to fit the work around your baby's needs -shorter day or long lunch break?
- ◇ Could your baby come to work with you for all or part of the day especially when very young?
- ◇ Could you change your job to one that is more family friendly?
- ◇ Can you work from home for some or all of the time?



Graphic by Paulo Santos, Brazil

What to find out about balancing breastfeeding and employment

During your pregnancy or before your maternity leave is over, talk to your manager about your need for support for continuing breastfeeding when you return to work.

You need **time** - either to feed the baby or to express. These breaks are in addition to lunch and other breaks. Your work needs to be covered while you are on a break so that you do not feel rushed or uneasy or feel your co-workers are annoyed by your break. You may want to discuss flexible working hours, too.

You need **space**. Is there a warm, clean place where the baby can be brought to you or where you can express in privacy?

You need **support** - to know that breastfeeding is seen by managers and co-workers as important.

Talk with other mothers who continued breastfeeding after returning to work to find out how they do it. Contact your local breastfeeding support groups to find other mothers.