

## Storage of Breastmilk

Breastmilk can be safely stored either in a refrigerator or in a cool box with ice packs. The lower the temperature, the longer it can be stored.

### Safe storage

PLACE	MAXIMUM TIME
FRESH BREAST MILK	
Room	6 hours
Fridge: 5°C to 10°C	3 days
Freezer: -18°C or lower	6 months
PREVIOUSLY FROZEN BREAST MILK	
Defrosted in fridge	12 hours
Defrosted outside fridge	Use immediately

## Benefits for the Company

Be sure to tell your employer about the many benefits of supporting you in breastfeeding:

- Workplace support is the single strongest predictor of increased productivity, employee satisfaction, morale, and company loyalty.
- Supporting breastfeeding women can be an important recruitment tool for women planning to have children, and improves employee retention even through multiple births.
- Breastfed babies have fewer infections and visits to the doctor, which means that you will spend less time away from work caring for a sick child.
- Between increased productivity and retention and decreased time away from work, companies that support women to breastfeed note significant cost savings.

## You Can Do It!

Many women are intimidated by the idea of asking their employers to support them in breastfeeding. However, research conducted in South Africa indicates that most companies are amenable to providing this support, but are simply unaware of breastfeeding women's needs.

By advocating for your right to breastfeed in the workplace you not only help you and your baby, but also serve as a model and inspiration for other women around you.

Please help promote breastfeeding by sharing this brochure with your employer and others who may benefit from this information.

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## Breastfeeding



## and returning to work



## Breastfeeding and Returning to Work

More and more women today are returning to work while they have young children or infants. Knowing the importance of breastmilk, many of them want to continue breastfeeding for as long as possible. Unfortunately, they often find returning to work to be one of the biggest barriers to continuing breastfeeding.

This brochure is designed to help you continue breastfeeding even as you return to the workplace, which will maximize the benefits of breastmilk for you and your baby. Although durations of breastfeeding tend to be shorter among working women, you can reverse this trend by actively planning for balancing breastfeeding and work.

## Why Breastfeed?

Breastfeeding is the biological norm, and any other form of infant feeding is inferior. Breastmilk has the perfect nutritional components for babies' growth and development—even changing in response to growing babies' needs—and has immunological properties to protect babies while their immune systems are still developing. Breastfeeding is also important for mothers, as women who do not breastfeed have an increased risk of osteoporosis and reproductive cancers.

Given the importance of breastmilk, it is recommended that women breastfeed for as long as possible. The World Health Organisation recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months, the introduction of nutritious complementary foods at 6 months, and continued breastfeeding for 2 years and beyond.

## Breastfeeding Basics

- Get breastfeeding off to a good start in hospital. Put your baby to the breast within an hour after delivery and then at least 8-12 times every 24 hours.
- Exclusively breastfeed your baby on demand.
- Avoid using bottles and dummies for the first 4-6 weeks, as this may confuse your baby and decrease milk supply.

## Tips on Expressing

- Invest in a good quality breast pump.
- Start using it and expressing a few weeks before you go back to work. Build up a supply of breastmilk in your freezer.
- A good time to express is early morning.
- Don't worry if you only get very little the first time you express. The amount will increase as you pump regularly.
- If you have trouble getting your milk flowing, massage your breasts and gently rub your nipples to stimulate the "let down" reflex. Placing a warm cloth on your breasts also helps. Relax as much as possible, and bring a photo of your baby along too.

## Planning for Breastfeeding in the Workplace

- Begin planning as soon as possible. Get advice from a Lactation Consultant about combining work and breastfeeding.
- Plan to take as much maternity leave as possible.
- Try to speak with your employer before you return to work, or ideally even before you go on maternity leave.
- Tell your employer that you are planning to breastfeed and that you want to continue by expressing while at work.
- Ask your employer to support you with breastfeeding by providing you with
  - Time: You are legally entitled (by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75) to two paid 30-minute "breastfeeding breaks" each day in addition to your normal tea and lunch breaks.
  - Space for expressing and storing your milk: Try to find a clean, private space to express your milk. This can be an office or unused room, and should ideally be one that locks and has curtains or blinds. If you use an electric pump, it will need to have a plug point or an extension cord to a nearby outlet. To store your milk, you will need a refrigerator or a cool box with ice packs, whichever your company or you can provide.
- If possible, ask your employer about arranging for a flexible schedule. Any sort of accommodation - working from home, or flexibility in your work hours - can help you to balance breastfeeding with work.

## Back at Work

- Go back to work on a Thursday or Friday to make the adjustment easier.
- Try taking a Wednesday off for a few weeks, as this gives you a chance to breastfeed your baby and build up your milk supply again.
- Breastfeed as often as possible before you go to work, once you get home and over week-ends.
- You need to pump as often as you would feed your baby—every 2-3 hrs. If you are working full time that means expressing mid-morning, at lunch and mid-afternoon.
- If you pump both breasts at the same time allow for 15-20 minutes. If you pump separately, allow for 30 minutes.
- Choose a breastfeeding friendly care giver. Freeze breastmilk in small amounts so it thaws quickly. Thaw overnight in a refrigerator.
- Make sure your baby is not fed just before you get home.
- Choose your work wardrobe with your baby in mind. Loose fitting blouses camouflage leaking and are easy for expressing.

## Sample Pumping Time Table at Work

8:00 am	Begin work
9:45-10:00 am	Use break to express
12 noon	Express during lunch break
2.30 pm	Use break to express
5.00 pm	Leave work

