



Maintaining a Breast Milk Supply While Working

Nursing is more than just providing nourishment for your baby; it is a time for bonding. Transitioning from being home to working again can be a difficult time for both you and your baby. Continuing nursing after going back to work can help with the transition of being apart during the work day.

Returning to work will mean baby is at breast less, and you will likely have to pump to maintain your milk supply. It is recommended to express milk or pump every three hours while away from your baby. At first you may need to express/pump more frequently so you are not uncomfortably full or start to leak. Full breasts and engorgement can slow milk production and are a signs you may need to pump more often. Breasts are never truly empty of milk, so pumping and removing even small amounts of milk from soft, comfortable breasts will increase production.

Babies nurse for comfort and food. Allow baby to nurse on demand when you are together. The “inbetween” comfort feeds can help your milk production. The first few weeks your baby will likely increase night-time nursing, to make up for lack of nursing during the day. Breastfeeding at night can help increase milk production since prolactin, the hormone that encourages milk production, is higher during night feedings. Breastfeeding on demand over the weekends and evening hours will help to rebuild your supply, especially if you noticed it decreasing when you are pumping during the week.

ADDITIONAL BREAST FEEDING TIPS

- Adding one more pumping session can help with supply; a 5-minute pumping session is better than not pumping at all. If the pumping session you added is not producing milk, continue to pump at the same time each day, and within a few days you will see your supply gradually increase because pumping stimulates milk production.
- Ideally, each pumping session should be about 15 minutes on each breast. Continue to pump for 2-5 minutes after the last drops of milk come out.
- Try cluster pumping instead of pumping or nursing every few hours. Sit down with your pump and baby, and switch between nursing and pumping every half hour for several hours.
- Breast compressions can help stimulate let-downs when pumping and will help to thoroughly drain all milk from the ducts. While pumping, use one hand to massage breast from the armpit towards the nipple, gradually increasing the pressure and finishing with a few firm squeezes of your breast.
- Take a pumping vacation and spend 2-3 days in bed nursing, resting and eating.

Remember it will take time to increase your supply; it will not happen overnight. Maintaining proper hydration, nutrition, and rest are just as important as frequently pumping and nursing to increase your milk supply.



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