



# **Breastfeeding and Working**

# Benefits of breastfeeding

If you're returning to work or study after having a baby, continuing to breastfeed is...

## Best for your baby

- Breast milk – all that your baby needs to eat and drink for about the first 6 months.
- Breast milk – still important for your baby when you introduce solid foods at around 6 months. If possible, keep breastfeeding until your baby is 12 months or older.
- Breastfeeding – means a healthier baby – fewer colds, tummy bugs, chest infections and allergies.
- Breastfeeding – helps you and the baby form a close bond. This bond is needed for emotional well-being throughout your baby's life.

## Best for you

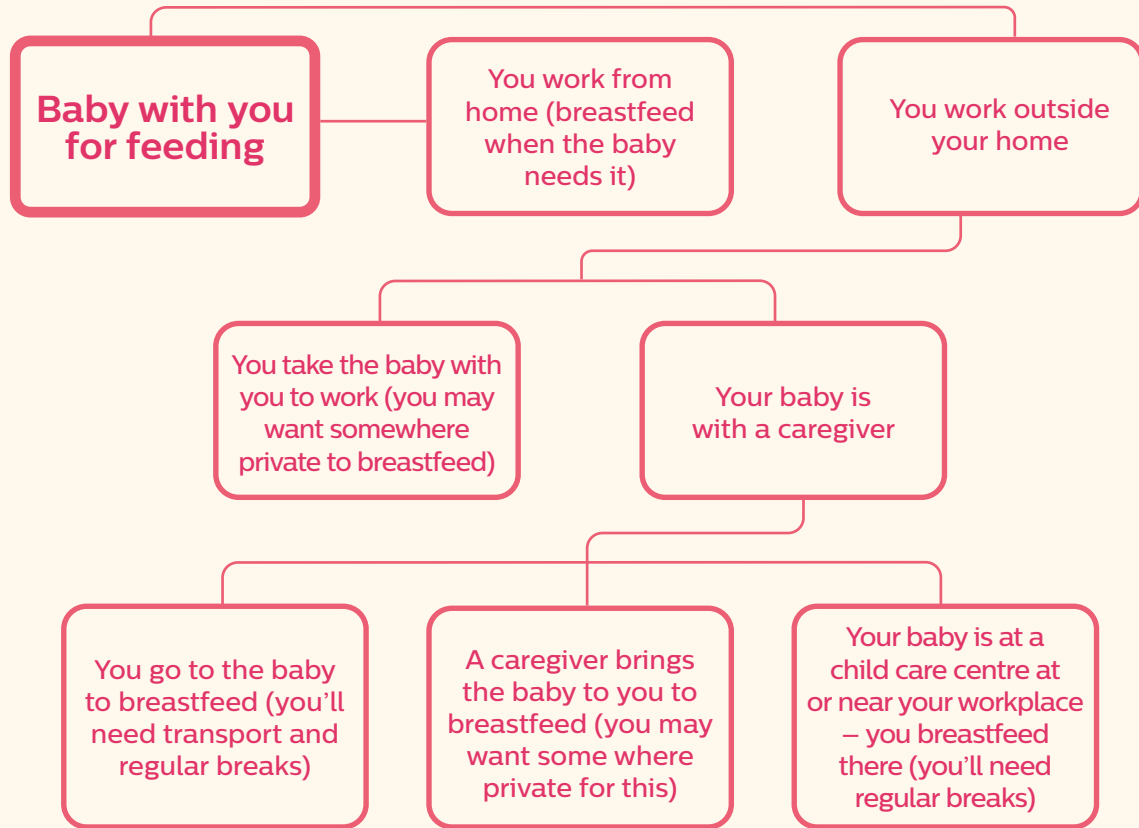
- You know you're doing something special for your baby.
- It saves time preparing formula.
- It saves money.
- You're less likely to get breast or ovarian cancer.
- You're less likely to have hip fractures when you're older.

## Best for your employer

- You'll have less time off with a sick baby.
- You'll work better knowing that your child is getting the best start.
- Your workplace will be known as family-friendly.

It usually takes about 6-8 weeks to establish breastfeeding properly and build up a good milk supply - delay going back to work as long as you can. Maybe you could go back to work gradually - by job sharing or working part time for a while.

# Breastfeeding and working options



Some mothers have another breastfeeding mother feed their baby while they're at work. It is important that all breastfeeding mothers are healthy. There is a small risk that hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV can be passed on to a baby through breast milk. Get advice from one of the places on the back of this pamphlet if you're thinking about doing this.

# Before you go back to work

## Talk to your employer. (You may want to take someone with you.)

### Explain the benefits for your employer of you continuing to breastfeed.

Explain that to breastfeed or express, all you will need is:

- a clean, private place
- a comfortable chair
- at least two 20 minute breaks.

And if you're expressing:

- a power point (if you're using an electric pump)
- a fridge or somewhere to store a chillybin with ice packs
- running water to wash expressing equipment.

### If you're going to be giving your baby expressed breast milk:

- Make sure that breastfeeding is going really well first.
- Start expressing 2–3 weeks before you go back to work.
- Get baby used to having your expressed milk.
- Get baby used to being fed by someone else besides you.
- Keep breastfeeding often.
- Build up a good supply of expressed milk in the freezer.

If you decide to stop breastfeeding, try not to do this at the same time as starting work. This is hard on both you and your baby.

If you have difficulties getting support from your workplace, phone the EEO Trust (09) 525 3023 or visit [www.diversityworks.nz](http://www.diversityworks.nz)

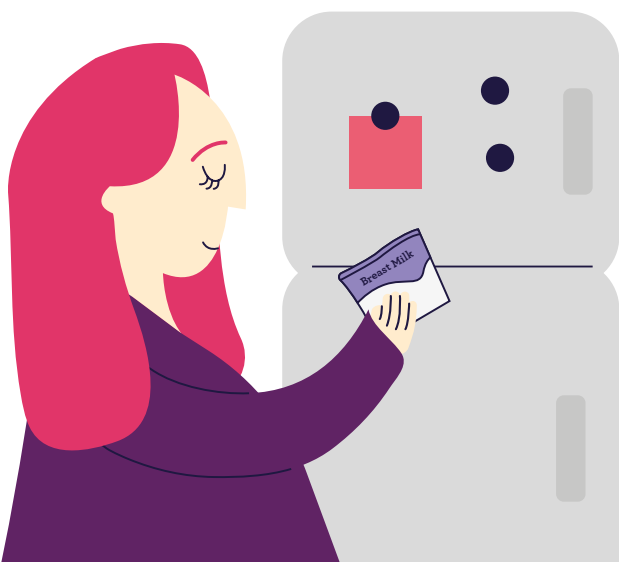
# Storing

- Express your breast milk into a clean, airtight container with a sealed lid.
- Date all stored milk.
- Refrigerate or freeze breast milk as soon as possible. Store in the bottom half of the fridge or freezer and towards the back.
- If expressing at work, store milk in fridge or chillybin with ice packs until you get home.
- Thaw frozen milk gradually.
- Breast milk is OK for up to 24 hours after thawing.
- Don't refreeze after thawing.

## Store breast milk for:

- 4 hours at room temperature (keep it cool in a damp towel)
- 48 hours (2 days) in the fridge
- 2 weeks in the freezer box in the fridge
- 3–6 months in the separate freezer part of the fridge-freezer
- 6 months in a separate chest freezer.

**Do not boil or microwave breast milk.**



# Expressing Milk



Manual Pump



Electric Pump



Hand

Buy or hire an electric pump from a pharmacy, lactation consultant or hospital.

If you think your milk supply is getting low, breastfeed and express more often.

## Cleaning

- Wash and rinse pumps and containers in very hot water.
- If your baby is under three months old, sterilise pumps and containers by:
  - boiling in water for 5 minutes, or
  - soaking in a sterilising solution for 1 hour.

(Some pumps can be sterilised in a microwave.)

## **Malia – went back to work at the hospital when her baby was 4 months.**

Before Zoe was born, I thought I'd go back to work straight away, but I was so tired after the birth. Now I work three days a week at the hospital, and there's a creche right there. When she first went there she was feeding a lot, so she had formula twice a day as well as a breastfeed at lunchtime. My breasts got so full I had to express a bit at work, and I took that milk down for her as well. Then I decided I wanted to express enough for her to have only breast milk. I rang La Leche League, and they gave me information on how to slowly build up my milk supply so I had enough milk to feed her all day. Now she's nearly a year old. I still go down and feed her at lunchtime, but she doesn't need the other feeds during the day.

Your baby will benefit from being breastfed at any age - breastfeed as long as you can.

## **Dawn – sometimes works from home and sometimes takes her baby to work with her. The baby is 10 weeks old.**

I needed to go back to work soon after Solomon was born because I'm on my own. Luckily I do the sort of work that I can take a baby to. He comes with me and sleeps in the bassinet by my desk. I can breastfeed him whenever I want. It works well now while he's so young, but when he's a bit older and getting into everything, I'll have to find a caregiver for him. About a month ago, it was really painful when he was feeding because I had cracked nipples. I went to the Plunket Family Centre near me, and they showed me how to latch him on properly (he was only half on), and now it's fine. Lucky for me my flatmate loves cooking and makes dinner most nights, and Mum comes round in the weekend so I can have a rest.

Take care of yourself - ask for help from friends, family and whānau.

## **Rebecca – Rebecca’s partner Joe looks after their 5-month-old baby while she studies at Tech.**

Joe looks after Isaac while I go to my morning lectures. Before I go, I feed him and then hand-express a bit of milk for Joe to give him while I’m out. By the time I get home about 1.30, he’s ready for another feed. Joe starts work at 4.00 so we have a little bit of time together before he goes. I learned how to breastfeed from watching my sisters feed their kids.

**Breastfeeding works by supply and demand – the more you feed your baby, the more milk you will have.**

## **Caroline – went back to work fulltime when her baby Willa was 13 weeks old. Willa’s Dad looks after her.**

I was nervous about returning to work – we would all have to figure out how to handle breastmilk, pumps and bottles. We had wonderful support from our midwife, who encouraged us to first form a solid breastfeeding relationship before worrying about bottles and pumps. We also had fantastic support from our Tamariki Ora nurse. She reassured me about my ability to manage and coached Willa’s Dad through his new bottle-feeding role. My work has a special room for parents, complete with a fridge and a sink, and I made it my own for the year. I tried hard to not be awkward or embarrassed about expressing at work – this meant that sometimes I had to excuse myself from meetings or conversations to “go and sort my boobs out”. Being stressed, thirsty or hungry really affected my supply at work, and on some days I had to try really hard to de-stress before I could express. To help I stuck pictures of Willa on the walls, booked protected time in my diary for two expressing breaks each day, and added a reminder to my diary each night to ‘take milk home’. Having a supportive manager and team really helped.

**If you’re breastfeeding, eat well and drink plenty of water.**



## **Hinemoa – went back to work when her baby was 6 months. The baby goes to a kōhanga reo.**

Ani goes to kōhanga while I'm at work. It's a busy day. I breastfeed her in the morning when she first wakes up and then a quick top-up before we go. I express twice at work (I have long morning and afternoon teas and no lunch break). I hired an electric pump from the pharmacy. I go into the first-aid room, get out my bottles, and away I go! It's quite nice being in there on my own. I couldn't get much milk at first – but I rang the hospital where Ani was born and they put me onto a lactation consultant who helped me heaps. Anyway, there's no fridge at work so I store my milk in a chillybin with ice-packs until I get home. Then I put the bottles in the fridge and give Ani the breast straight away. The next day we start all over again. I take the expressed milk from the day before for her feeds at kōhanga. They're great there and understand that I want to keep breastfeeding her. It's really important for me to know she's getting something special when I'm not there.

**Do a practice run before returning to work to make sure everything runs smoothly on the day.**



## Getting support for yourself

### Ask family and friends for help

- Be specific about what needs doing, eg, housework, cooking, shopping, washing, looking after older children.
- Your partner and/or other family members can help with the baby, eg, bathing, playing, singing, changing nappies, reading stories.

# Getting help with breastfeeding and working

## For support and information about:

- problems with breastfeeding
- learning how to express breast milk
- breast pumps
- managing breastfeeding when you return to work

## look in the phone book or online:

- Plunket Family Centres ([www.plunket.org.nz](http://www.plunket.org.nz))
- La Leche League ([www.lalecheleague.org.nz](http://www.lalecheleague.org.nz))
- a Māori or Pacific Well Child Service ([www.wellchild.org.nz](http://www.wellchild.org.nz))
- your midwife or other lead maternity carer (LMC)
- Parents Centre ([www.parentscentre.org.nz](http://www.parentscentre.org.nz))
- a private lactation consultant (there will be a charge)  
– contact your nearest maternity hospital or phone 0800 452 282
- Well Child Healthline – freephone 0800 611 116
- Plunketline – 24 hours, 7 days, freephone 0800 933 922

or talk to a friend or family member who has returned to work and breastfed successfully. If infant formula is needed, talk to your midwife, family doctor, practice nurse or a lactation consultant.

Contact Details	

**If you're not happy, get a second opinion.**

