

Making it **WORK**

FOR FAMILY MEMBERS



NEW YORK
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HEALTH

New York State
WIC
Together Growing Stronger Families



Making it Work: For Family Members

Support from family members can help make it easier for new moms to continue breastfeeding... even after they return to work. Here's how you can help!

Breastfeeding: Perfect Food for Babies

Research studies show that breastfed babies:¹

- Are less likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
- Have fewer ear infections, respiratory infections, stomach issues, and allergies
- Have fewer digestive problems and are less likely to be constipated
- Are less likely to develop cancer or diabetes
- Are less likely to be obese

Research studies show moms who breastfeed:

- Burn up to 500 calories a day
- Enjoy a special bond with their baby
- Have lower stress levels
- Are less likely to develop breast cancer or ovarian cancer
- Are less likely to develop diabetes



What Breastfeeding Moms Need

Many women continue to breastfeed after they return to work. How is this possible? Moms breastfeed their baby when they are home, and express their milk using a breast pump when they are away from the baby. This helps their body continue making milk and allows them to give their milk to their baby when they are away. Your support will help moms feel confident and relaxed knowing they are giving their baby the best they can, even after they return to work.

Family Members Can Help!

Moms rely on the people closest to them...their family...for support with breastfeeding, especially when they return to work.

Dads/Partners. You have a special role to make the mom feel special and important. Help her feel your love and emotional support, and tell her you are proud of her for giving your baby such a healthy start in life. Going back to work also adds new tasks to her day, which can make her feel tired. Your help and support at home will make things easier.

Grandmothers. Moms look to their own mothers for encouragement and support. Even if you did not breastfeed, you can show her you are proud of her. It's tempting to want to help by taking charge of the baby, but new moms need help with lots of things. Ask her what she would like you to do. She might need a meal cooked, or help with the laundry, or she may want you to watch the baby while she takes a bath or a walk. Find little ways to show her you are proud of her. She'll never forget it!



¹Agency for Health Care Research and Quality. (2007). Breastfeeding and Infant and Maternal Health Outcomes in Developed Countries. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK38337.

Here are some things grandmothers can do to enjoy their breastfed grandbaby:

- Hold the baby close
- Take baby for a walk
- Read to the baby
- Play with the baby
- Rock the baby
- Bathe the baby
- Dress the baby in cute clothes

Did You Know?

You cannot spoil babies by holding them!

Holding babies actually helps babies become more independent later in life because their need for closeness is met while they are young and still developing. Letting babies cry actually increases their stress levels!

Babies do not go into a deep sleep state until 20-30 minutes after they fall asleep.

If baby wakes up when you put him down, try holding and rocking him for about 20 minutes first.

Breastfeeding moms get 45 minutes of extra sleep per night!

The best way to make milk is to breastfeed.

The more a mom breastfeeds, the more milk she will make. If she gives anything else to the baby, her body will make less milk. She can increase her milk by breastfeeding more often.

Women who breastfeed find it easier to lose their pregnancy weight.

Babies do not need any other foods besides their mother's milk until they are 6 months old.

Giving other foods too early can cause allergies.

“My daughter barely has room in her freezer because it is full of breastmilk she has pumped at work. I didn't breastfeed because of working full time. It is wonderful to see how she works with her employer and demands that no one give the baby formula (including not having any formula anywhere in sight). I see the benefits with my grandson everyday – he has great eye contact, he sleeps well, and I hardly know he has pooped because his diapers smell soooo good!” – **Cynthia Clemmons, Age 61, Grandmother of 6-month-old Jonah – since birth 100% breastfed and counting...**



Back at Work

Ways to Help

- Help moms organize their time at home so they can get plenty of rest and take care of themselves.
- Take charge of the baby's diaper bag, cleaning it out each day and restocking it with fresh diapers, clothing, and expressed breast milk.
- Clean pump parts each evening so mom can focus on baby and other important tasks.
- Change the baby's diaper and get baby ready for the childcare provider to give mom a little extra time to get ready, or to squeeze in an extra feeding before leaving for work.
- Prepare meals and help with common household tasks such as housework and laundry.



Giving Support

- Tell a breastfeeding mom you are proud of her! For example:
 - “What a great mom you are to give your baby such a good start in life.”
 - “It's obvious how much you love our baby! It makes me feel very proud.”
 - “What a wonderful gift you are giving the baby! What can I do to make things easier for you?”
- Encourage her to continue breastfeeding for as long as she wishes. She is giving baby a gift that will last the child's entire lifetime!
- Remind her to rest and eat healthy foods so she will have more energy.
- Remind her that a spotless house is not necessary; family time is. Babies grow all too quickly. Set family priorities to enjoy time together!
- Encourage her to get help if she has questions or concerns with breastfeeding. Call the WIC office or check the website: www.breastfeedingpartners.org. To find a lactation consultant, ask the local hospital or check the “Find a Lactation Consultant Directory” at the website of the International Lactation Consultant Association at: www.ilca.org.



If You'll Be Caring for the Baby

Many grandmothers, dads, partners, and family relatives care for the baby while mom returns to work. If you will be helping out with the baby, here are some tips to make it easier and rewarding!

Feeding a Breastfed Baby

- Breastfed babies eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full. Follow the baby's hunger signals rather than a schedule.

- Breastfed babies may eat less at each feeding, and eat more often. This is because human milk is digested very easily. They also take different amounts at each feeding. This is one of the reasons breastfed babies are not as likely to be obese.
- Many breastfed babies need time and patience learning to take milk from a bottle.
 - If you'll be using a bottle to feed the baby, try offering it when baby is not so hungry or upset, or when baby is still a little sleepy.
 - Running some warm water over the nipple may also help; breastfed babies are not used to cold nipples!
 - Some babies will take milk more easily from a cup, a spoon, or a dropper.
- Breastfed babies are used to being held and feeling the closeness of mom's skin when feeding. Hold the baby close when feeding a bottle. Rather than pushing the nipple into the baby's mouth, touch the baby's lower lip and wait for him to open his mouth and draw it in.
- Never prop a bottle or leave baby alone during a feeding.
- Breastfed babies love to snuggle! Don't be surprised if the baby acts hungry after the feeding. Baby may not need more food, but more closeness. Comfort and hold the baby close for a while before offering more milk.

Supporting Mom

- Try not to give baby a full feed if mom will be home within an hour or two. She may be feeling full and want to breastfeed right away.
- Instead, try to calm the baby in other ways, or just offer a very small amount to take the edge off before mom arrives.
- Give mom some quiet time and space to reconnect with the baby. If mom will be traveling home after picking up the baby, provide her space to breastfeed before she leaves .

How to Handle Human Milk

It is okay to handle human milk. It is food for the baby that is full of infection-fighting ingredients, so you do not need to wear gloves or take special precautions.



Human milk does not look like formula. It may appear watery or have a bluish tint, or may look yellow when frozen. The creamy part of the milk will separate from the milk and rise to the top. This is all normal. Gently shake the milk to blend it together before feeding it to the baby.

Human milk can be stored in a refrigerator or freezer, and thawed as needed to meet the needs of the baby. Carefully follow the guidelines for handling human milk below. Breastfeeding moms work hard to express their milk, and it is too valuable to waste!

Handling Human Milk

- Human milk can be stored up to 6 months in the freezer.
- Milk that will not be used within 48 hours (2 days) should be frozen, not refrigerated.
- Thaw frozen milk under warm water. NEVER microwave breast milk!
- Once milk is warmed, use it immediately, and only for that feeding.
- Milk left in the bottle after feeding should be discarded.
- Milk that has been thawed should not be refrozen.



WIC Helps!

WIC supports breastfeeding mothers with:

- Ideas for how to breastfeed and work
- Extra foods
- Nutrition staff who can answer your questions
- Breast pumps
- Peer counselors (experienced breastfeeding moms just like you)

For more breastfeeding information visit: www.breastfeedingpartners.org

For more information about caring for a breastfed baby, check: www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/breastfeedingspon.htm



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