

CAN I CONTINUE BREASTFEEDING IF I RETURN TO WORK AND I AM SEPARATED FROM MY BABY?

If you plan to return to work after your baby is born, you may wonder if it is possible to combine breastfeeding and working. Yes, breastfeeding can continue after your maternity leave is over. Many working mothers value the special relationship they have with their babies that comes from continuing to breastfeed. It takes some planning however, and there is some practical information you'll need to know. See our leaflet, Breastfeeding and Working, for more information on expressing and storing breast milk, etc., or contact your local La Leche League Leader.

Of necessity the information in this leaflet is of a general nature. If you need help or support or if you have a specific concern contact your local La Leche League Leader.

Babies come in both genders, in this leaflet we have referred to baby as "he", for clarity's sake, since mother is unquestionably "she"



Contact **La Leche League** if you need help.

To contact **La Leche League**
see your local telephone directory

OR

Visit us online at

www.lalecheleagueireland.com

Your local **La Leche League Leader(s)**
can be contacted by calling

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LA LECHE LEAGUE IS.....

....a voluntary organisation which provides information and support to women who want to breastfeed their babies.

....Mother to Mother

All La Leche League Leaders are mothers who have breastfed their own babies and who enjoy helping other mothers to do so.

LLL Leaders are available at any time to speak with a mother personally or on the telephone.

LLL also provides information and experience for mothers in special circumstances (premature babies, multiple births, babies with cleft of the soft palate, babies with Down's Syndrome and many others).

....Local Groups

Each group holds monthly discussion meetings on various aspects of pregnancy, parenting and breastfeeding. It is helpful for mothers to come along while pregnant to learn about breastfeeding and reassuring to attend after the baby is born. Babies are especially welcome at meetings. Each group maintains a lending library of books and leaflets on childbirth, breastfeeding and childcare which is available to anyone attending meetings.

If you would like to take out a year's subscription to **La Leche League of Ireland**, and receive six issues of our newsletter, contact LLL for information.

I would like to make a donation of

I enclose a cheque/p.o. for made payable to **La Leche League of Ireland**.

Name:

Address:

Please send completed form to:

Address listed under **La Leche League of Ireland** in your local telephone directory. (Please include SAE with any postal enquiry).

BREASTFEEDING

The Best Beginning



La Leche League of Ireland
BREASTFEEDING HELP AND INFORMATION

Only a Phonecall Away!
See your local telephone directory

Breastfeeding confers significant short and long term health benefits for both mother and baby which last well beyond the period of breastfeeding itself.

WHY IS BREASTFEEDING BEST FOR MY BABY?

Breastfeeding is uniquely suited to meet both the physical and emotional needs of your baby.

At the breast your baby will find the perfect nourishment for his growing body, as well as the love and security he needs for his healthy development.

Breast milk provides an important source of immune factors.

The breastfed baby receives antibodies through his mother's milk. Breast milk also contains living cells that act against bacteria in the infant.

Breastfed babies have fewer respiratory illnesses.

They even have fewer colds. Breastfed babies are less likely to get serious illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia.

Breastfed babies have fewer allergies.

When compared with formula feeding, exclusive breastfeeding for six months results in a lower incidence of allergies. Breastfed babies are less likely to be troubled by eczema and nappy rash.

Breast milk protects against illness.

Breastfed babies have less gastroenteritis, less vomiting, fewer ear infections and fewer hospital admissions than formula fed infants.

Breastfed babies are less likely to become obese in later life.

WHY IS BREASTFEEDING BEST FOR ME?

Breastfeeding helps you to lose weight and to get back in shape.

Breastfeeding makes it easier to shed any extra pounds put on during pregnancy. More than 500 extra calories are burned every day while you are breastfeeding - that's like swimming thirty lengths of the pool!

Breastfeeding helps to reduce the risk of osteoporosis and of breast, uterine and ovarian cancers.

Breastfeeding helps to keep baby happy and content.

Because breast milk is easily digested, breastfed babies are less likely to be troubled by wind and stomach upsets. The frequent contact with their mothers through breastfeeding helps them to feel secure.

Breast milk needs no preparation. It is always available at the right temperature. Breastfeeding is ideal for travelling and for night feeds.

Breastfeeding encourages bonding. Breastfeeding provides a rich emotional experience for both mother and baby, reinforcing their need to be together. Frequent breastfeeding means lots of skin to skin contact and lots of time spent getting to know one another.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Research shows that good positioning will help to prevent sore nipples and increase your milk supply. Breastfeeding should not hurt. Make sure that you are comfortable and that your baby is well positioned at the breast.

Here is a checklist to help with positioning.

- **Your baby's body should be on his side, completely facing you, tummy to tummy.**
- **Your baby should be cradled in your arm on the same side as the breast he is taking. For example when you are feeding on the right breast your baby's head will rest on your right forearm with his feet at your left side.**
- **Use your other hand to support your breast, thumb on top and fingers underneath the breast, well back from the nipple area. You may need to support your breast in this way for some or all of the feeding time.**
- **Encourage your baby to open his mouth wide by touching his lips lightly with the nipple.**
- **When your baby's mouth is open wide bring him to the breast, rather than the breast to your baby.**
- **Bring your baby onto the breast lower lip first.**
- **Make sure that some of the darker area (areola) around the nipple is in your baby's mouth. More of the areola should be showing above your baby's mouth than below.**
- **Feeding soon after the birth, and feeding often, will help to get breastfeeding off to a good start.**

The most important sign that all is well is that you should feel comfortable while breastfeeding. So if you feel that something is not quite right contact your local La Leche League Leader.

HOW OFTEN DO I NEED TO FEED MY BABY?

Nurse often. The more you nurse the more milk there will be. Breastfed babies prefer to nurse every two to three hours. This is because mother's milk is digested more easily and rapidly than cow's milk (formula).

Breastfed babies also benefit from the comfort and closeness to their mothers which come from frequent nursing. Newborns need to nurse about 10-12 times in a 24 hour period. The length of the breastfeed should be determined by the baby's interest and response. The usual pattern is this:

Nurse the baby on one breast until he slows down or starts to lose interest, then after time out, for a burp or a cuddle, switch to the other breast for as long as you and baby wish - perhaps ten minutes, perhaps longer.

Next feeding reverse the order, offering the last used breast first. Babies are born with different nursing patterns. Some babies want to nurse frequently, other babies nurse less frequently. Nursing less often than ten times in twenty four hours is not a problem provided baby is gaining weight, appears healthy with firm skin, is growing in length and is alert and active. Breastfeed your baby on cue. Watch your baby, not the clock.

Most mothers find it takes six to eight weeks before their milk supply is established. During this time both mother and baby are really still learning about breastfeeding. After several weeks your baby will become more settled and predictable and you will grow in confidence as a mother. Try to get extra rest and eat a well balanced diet. Look after yourself so that you can look after your baby.

IS MY BABY GETTING ENOUGH?

Most babies regain their birth weight by 2 weeks.

A baby who has 6-8 wet cloth nappies or 5-6 disposable nappies, and a number of loose, mustard-coloured stools per day (while he is under six weeks of age) is getting plenty of milk. What comes out must have gone in!

HOW DO I BREASTFEED WHEN VISITORS CALL?

It is quite easy to nurse a small baby discreetly if you wear separates. A loose fitting top or shirt can be lifted from the waist for easy nursing. You can turn away slightly until your baby is latched on. Once he is nursing, your baby could be sleeping in your arms for all anyone knows. Learning how to breastfeed discreetly helps you to feel comfortable feeding your baby anywhere.