

# Sterling Parents



# Return to Work

**A Pumping Guide**

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Going back to work after baby brings up a lot of emotions and uncertainty. From fears about leaving baby, to worries about pumping at work, you've got so much to think about and plan for.

Let me take something off your plate. This guide gives you everything you need to know to rock the pump game! I'd far prefer you spend your time with your sweet babe. Hugs :)

xoxo,  
Dr .Sterling

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P.S.

My best advice for going back to work is: You just have to get through day 1. Don't worry about forever. Just get through one day.

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# A Quick Start Guide to Pumping

## What you need to know...

Pumping is very different from breastfeeding. For one, babies are typically much better at removing milk from the breast than a pump is. So even if you aren't getting much from the pump, if baby is happy and gaining weight, you don't need to worry that you aren't making enough. How much you pump is not necessarily a reflection of your supply.

When you first start pumping, especially if it is in the first months of life, when babies are more likely to cluster feed or feed more frequently, you want to pump about an hour after baby feeds. This allows your breasts enough time to fill before the next feed.

You make the most milk in the early morning hours. This means, in terms of post-feed pumping, the pump 1 hr after the morning feed will typically yield the most.

You will yield much more breast milk if you actively express while you pump. Click on the bottle below for a hands-on pumping instruction video. The instructions for hand-on pumping runs from 1:26 onward.

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Pumping sessions should last 15-20 minutes, with a maximum of 30 minutes.

Before you go back to work, it is helpful to have a rough idea of how much milk you pump per session, so you can calculate how many pumping sessions you will need to provide enough milk for when you are away from baby.

If you are not getting much from a post-feed pump you can consider pumping in the evening during baby's longest stretch without feeding at night. Though, as sleep is so important and hard to come by, don't jump straight to this. If you do need to add a nighttime pumping session, try to make up the sleep somewhere. For example, let's say baby's longest stretch at night is from 1am to 5am. You can try a pumping session (20 minutes) between 2-4am. To make up that 30 minutes of lost sleep, have someone else burp, soothe, and change baby to go down to bed at 1 am, or after your feed earlier in the evening, so you can go straight to bed after the feed.

## Pumping at Work Links

-  [Your Breastfeeding Rights as an Employee \(United States\)](#)
-  [List of resources for working and pumping](#)
-  [List of resources for milk expression and pump tips](#)

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# Preparing a Milk Supply

Figuring out how much milk you need to pump for those first few days of work

## General Estimates & Info

Talk to your pediatrician before you go back to work about how much baby is eating. Any recommendations from baby's pediatrician supersede anything in this workbook, as she knows your baby best.

**Average breastmilk intake between one to six months= 25oz\* per day**

Range typically 20-40 oz/24 hrs with more babies towards the lower end of that range

**Average amount of breastmilk per feed between one to six months= 3 oz**

Babies who take breast milk from a bottle typically consume slightly more per feed

Side note: During the first month of life baby rapidly increases the number of ounces they consume. However, after that their rate of growth then slows considerably, and thus they consume about the same from month one to six. Once baby starts taking in solid foods, the amount of breastmilk they consume typically drops.

\*Kent, J. C., Mitoulas, L. R., Cregan, M. D., Ramsay, D. T., Doherty, D. A., & Hartmann, P. E. (2006). Volume and frequency of breastfeedings and fat content of breast milk throughout the day. *Pediatrics*, 117(3), e387-395.

# The Six Step Breast Milk Stash

## Step One

First we need to figure out how many times your baby feeds in 24 hrs. About a month before going back to work, several times a week (this does not need to be done everyday), start recording how many feeds baby has in 24 hrs.

# of feeds per day=\_\_\_\_\_ (range)

## Step Two

Now we need to guess how many ounces your baby consumes per feeding.

25oz/ # of feeds in 24 hrs = average ounces per feed

You can also calculate the range of ounces per feed by dividing the low end (20oz) by baby's # of feeds and then dividing the high end (40 oz) by baby's # of feeds.\*\*

# of ounces per feed=\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Because we aren't talking about how much we are going to actually feed baby, just how much you want to have available for baby, assuming baby takes in more is not bad, but it may put more pressure on you to have that amount of milk available.

## Step Three

Now that we know an approximate # of ounces your baby takes in per feed, let's calculate how much milk you need to have on hand while you are away at work

# of feeds away from home (most days) x # ounces per feed=  
\_\_\_\_\_approx # ounces needed for most days

# of feeds away from home (long days) x # ounces per feed=  
\_\_\_\_\_approx # ounces needed for long days

## Step Four

Now you need to make a decision: How much milk do I need to have available for my baby so I am not worrying that they don't have enough?

A comfortable amount for many is:

Milk Stash oz= (approx # ounces needed for most days) x 1.5

For some, that might not be enough. Remember, this is about what you feel comfortable with!

Super-saver Milk Stash oz= (approx # ounces needed for long days) x 2

## Step Five

Next, we need to figure out your pumping schedule to have your Milk Stash available for your first day of work.

# of ounces you pump per session \_\_\_\_ (this is often a range, see the quick start pump guide on pages 2-3 to get started)

Milk Stash oz)/(# of ounces you pump per session)= # of pumping sessions you need to do for your Milk Stash

## Step Six

Look at calendar and pencil in your pump sessions.

Ideally, baby gets fresh or refrigerated milk. Breastmilk does lose some of its benefits once frozen. Breastmilk can be refrigerated for up to 4 days.\* So in the ideal situation, you pump this milk supply no longer than 4 days from your first day of work and instruct baby's caretaker to start with oldest milk first. You must balance this with trying to keep the last days of your maternity leave as stress free as possible, because there is typically enough anxiety.

You now have a schedule and plan to have breastmilk available for you first day of work! Congratulations!

\*Per the American Academy of Pediatrics, if very cleanly expressed, breast milk can sometimes last up to 8 days in the refrigerator

# Pumping Supplies Shopping List



## The Pump

The pump itself, in the United States, is covered by insurance. You want a double-electric pump. A great resource for obtaining a pump through your insurance is Pumping Essentials , though your provider may use a different company so check with them.



## The Pumping Bra

There are 2 different ways you can go with a pump bra. There are pump bras that you wear as your regular bra and ones you just put on for pumping. I preferred the all-in-one bras but give both types a try. Here are some of my favorites



**Bravado! Designs**  
turns any nursing bra into a  
pumping bra



**Lupantte**  
Nursing and pumping bra



## The Pump Bag

You can use any old bag to transport your pump parts, though some prefer to have a bag specially designed for the purpose.

### Sarah Wells

The Cadillac of work/pump bags. This is the one I used!



### Kah&Kee Backpack

Great for travel too!



## Nipple Care

To increase comfort with pumping you can reduce friction between your nipples/breasts and the pump flanges. I used an organic nipple cream prior to applying the flanges, though others use organic olive or coconut oil.

### Motherlove Organic Nipple Cream





## The Pump Parts Refrigerator Bag

As long as it is okay with your pediatrician, as it is for most healthy babies, you do not have to wash/sanitize your pump parts after every pumping session! You can refrigerate them in between uses and then wash at the end of the day.



Sarah Wells

Pump parts bag- this is the one I used!



## Leak Protection

Some women leak, others don't. To protect your clothing from leakages at work sustainable pads like the ones below are definitely the way to go.

Bamboobies  
Washable Nursing Pads





## Milk Storage Containers

When it comes to storing milk, glass is best. Plastics, even ones that say BPA-free, can harbor chemicals you would not want in your baby's system. The ones I used were definitely on the Getting all my cute pump supplies together for going back to work helped me to look forward to it just a little.



bkr

Strong, eco-friendly storage option. I used these!

Epica

Budget-friendly storage option



## Funnel

A silicone, compact funnel is a great way to ensure you preserve every last drop of your liquid gold as you transfer from your pump to your milk storage containers.

Cook with Color  
Compact silicone funnel





## Milk Labels

You want to label any milk you pump so that you are always feeding baby the older milk first. The only time you may forgo older milk in favor of newer milk (and just freeze the old stuff before its expiration date) is if kiddo is sick. If you are directly breastfeeding some of the time, your body will produce antibodies specific to the bug your baby is fighting so it's best to give them that extra boost.



Food Safe  
Dissolvable food labels



## Mike Storage Bag

You may need a bag/cooler to transport your milk to and from work, and to keep it in while refrigerated during the day. If you are commuting far distances, you may need a little ice pack as well..



Sarah Wells  
Milk Cooler Bag with Ice Pack



Skip Hop  
Milk Cooler Bag

# Storing Breast Milk

## American Academy of Pediatrics Guide to Storing Fresh Breast Milk

Place	Temperature	How Long	Things to Know
Countertop, table	Room temp (up to 77°F)	Up to 4 hours is best.  Up to 6 to 8 hours is okay for very cleanly expressed breast milk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store breast milk in small batches. 2 to 4 ounces is recommended to prevent waste.</li> <li>• Any remaining breast milk left in a bottle after your baby is finished with a feeding should be used within 2 hours, or, if quickly refrigerated, used for the next feeding. You can always thaw an extra bag if needed.</li> </ul>
Refrigerator	39°F or colder	Up to 4 days is best.  Up to 8 days is okay for very cleanly expressed breast milk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store breast milk in the back of the refrigerator.</li> <li>• To warm breast milk from the refrigerator, place the bottle in a bowl of warm water or run it under warm water. Heating breast milk in microwaves is not safe.</li> </ul>
Freezer	0°F or colder	Up to 9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store breast milk toward the back of the freezer.</li> <li>• Breast milk expands as it freezes, so do not fill the milk all the way to the top of the storage container.</li> <li>• To thaw breast milk from the freezer, put the bottle or bag in the refrigerator overnight, hold it under warm running water, or set it in a container of warm water. Heating breast milk in microwaves is not safe.</li> <li>• Once breast milk is thawed, it can be stored in a refrigerator and must be used within 24 hours.</li> </ul>
Deep freezer	-4°F or colder	Up to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store breast milk toward the back of the deep freezer.</li> <li>• Breast milk expands as it freezes, so do not fill the milk all the way to the top of the storage container.</li> <li>• To thaw breast milk from the deep freezer, put the bottle or bag in the refrigerator overnight, hold it under warm running water, or set it in a container of warm water. Heating breast milk in microwaves is not safe.</li> <li>• Once breast milk is thawed, it can be stored in a refrigerator and must be used within 24 hours.</li> </ul>

# Freezing Breast Milk

When I had excess milk I needed to freeze, I typically froze them according to how many ounces my kiddo was taking per feed.

So let's say you have 10 ounces to freeze and baby usually takes 3.5 ounces per feed.

I would freeze 2 bags with 3.5 ounces= 7 ounces, and then one bag with just 3 ounces.

I would then use the 3 ounces for a feeding that was close to another one or combine it with a single leftover ounce for a feed after a longer nap or during a growth spurt.



Junobie Bags  
silicone bags

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# Supply Issues

Supply issues go both ways. Too much and you are prone to clogged ducts, engorgement, and mastitis. Too little and you are constantly trying to keep up with kiddo and potentially running yourself ragged trying to do so.

Many people experience a decrease in milk supply when they go back to work. Some of this is situational from too much time between pump breaks, skipped pump breaks, and stress from work interfering with adequate milk let down.

The other component to this is that around 3-4 months there is typically a “leveling-out” of your supply, meaning many have a slight over supply initially, which then corrects itself. Some women resume their menses around the time they return to work, which can also bring about a slight down tick in supply.

Here are some reputable articles about both sides of the supply spectrum:

[Trouble shooting low-supply](#)

[Not pumping enough milk?](#)

[Trouble shooting over-supply](#)

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# Bottle Feeding Quick Start Guide

If you know, 100% that you need to go back to work and baby will have to feed from a bottle then it may benefit you and baby to introduce a bottle on the earlier side. Now, some organizations, out of concern for nipple confusion (when baby has difficulty switching between bottle and breastfeeding) recommend waiting until breastfeeding is firmly established, or baby is 4 weeks old to introduce a bottle. The data on nipple confusion is mixed. Some firmly believe that it's a thing, other pediatricians disagree. In actuality, there are going to be some babies who, when introduced to a bottle, find it easier and preferable. Often times mothers with fast or slow let-down find that their kiddos like bottle feeds. So introducing a bottle on the earlier side has the possibility for disrupting or making direct breastfeeding more challenging. This is where you need to decide on priorities. What is more important to you? Being able to directly breastfeed, or being able to bottle feed.

For me, because I knew that at 12 wks I 100% had to go back to work or the mortgage wouldn't get paid, and there was absolutely no way someone could bring baby to me to breastfeed during the day (wouldn't that be lovely)-- I decided my priority was that my daughter took a bottle with ease. I decided that I would rather, worst case scenario, lose the ability to directly breastfeed her than to be at work in those first few weeks worrying if she was going to take a bottle. Now, the vast majority of the time your baby will eventually take a bottle, especially once their milk source (ie you) isn't around. But nonetheless, that was my decision, and so we introduced a bottle in the first month of life and continued to do one bottle feeding everyday to every other day. Discuss with your partner and your pediatrician, make a decision and go with it!

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# Bottle Feeding Quick Start Guide

Paced bottle feeding is an excellent way to more closely mimic the breastfeeding experience with the bottle.

Paced bottle feeding has 2 potential benefits:

1. Maintain some consistency between bottle and breastfeeding so baby doesn't develop a clear preference for one over the other.
2. Allow baby enough time to feel full while bottle feeding so they do not overeat, as overeating is a bigger issue with bottle feeding than breastfeeding.

Click on the icon below to watch a video on paced bottle feeding



# Instructions for Feeding

These are my hunger cues:

I eat about every \_\_\_\_ hours

I usually eat \_\_\_\_ oz each time

Please put any leftover milk:

