



# Common breastfeeding concerns

## *Breastfeeding when you are working or away from your baby*

### Remember...

- Tell your employer if you are breastfeeding.
- Take as long a break as possible from work.
- Look at flexible work options.
- Express milk using your hand or a pump.
- Safely store and, if necessary, freeze and thaw expressed breastmilk.
- Sterilise expressing equipment such as bottles and pumps.

There may be many choices available if you are working or away from your baby.

- Talk to your employer as early as possible, even when you are still pregnant.
- Take as much time off work as you can.
- Work from home.
- Work part-time.
- Have someone bring your baby to you when she or he needs a breastfeed.
- Use a child carer close to where you work so you can go to your baby to feed.
- Express breastmilk while you are away and replace the missed breastfeeds with expressed milk fed from a cup or a bottle.
- For babies over six months, continue breastfeeding and replace missed breastfeeds with appropriate solid food.
- Replace breastfeeds while you are away from your baby with infant formula and then continue to breastfeed in the hours and days when you are not at work.
- Use night feeds to meet your baby's need for comfort and closeness.

### Expressing breastmilk

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Find somewhere private where you can sit down, relax and not be interrupted.
- Collect breastmilk in a sterilised container.
- Encourage the milkflow to make expressing easier (eg. gently massage the breast and relax).
- If more milk is needed, you can try again later.

### Hand expressing

- Place thumb and fingers on opposite sides of your breast just behind the areola (the darker skin around your nipple).
- Rhythmically squeeze your breast with a rolling movement between the thumb and fingers. Try about twice per second. Be gentle, especially if your breast is very full.
- Drops of milk form on the nipple. Milkflow may soon start and milk may spray. When the flow stops, move your thumb and fingers around the areola so that all the milk ducts are stimulated and drained.
- Change hands or breasts when you get tired.

### Using a pump

- Follow the directions that come with the pump.
- Ask whoever you got it from to show you how it works.
- It is often faster than hand expressing but you will not necessarily get more milk.
- Massage the breast towards the nipple while you are using the pump. This helps get the breastmilk out. Use a warm washer to assist breastmilk to flow.

### Storing expressed breastmilk

Pour the collected milk into a sterilised container and put it in the refrigerator or into the freezer, making sure to label with the date and time before freezing.

Breastmilk can be:

- refrigerated for up to 3–5 days (4°C or lower)
- stored without refrigeration (if needed) for 6–8 hours if the temperature is less than 26°C
- frozen in the freezer section of a refrigerator with separate freezer door for up to three months
- frozen in the deep freeze (-18° C or lower) for 6–12 months.

Always store breastmilk in the back of the refrigerator, not in the door.

If your freezer is a compartment inside your refrigerator, then only store the breastmilk for two weeks.

### Rewarming breastmilk

- Stand the bottle of breastmilk in a container of hot water for a few minutes (no more than 10 minutes).
- Before feeding your baby, check the temperature of the milk by letting a little drop onto the inside of your wrist. It should feel comfortably warm or even a little bit cool.
- Never microwave breastmilk.
- Discard any rewarmed milk that has not been used.

### Transportation of breastmilk

- Use an insulated container (such as an esky) with a freezer brick.
- If frozen milk remains frozen on arrival, put it directly into the freezer.
- If some of the milk has thawed, put it into the refrigerator and use it within 24 hours. Do not refreeze it.
- If the milk has never been frozen you can either store it in the refrigerator or freeze it.

### Using stored breastmilk

- When needed, use oldest milk first.
- Never refreeze thawed breastmilk.
- Previously frozen breastmilk can be thawed in the refrigerator and used within 24 hours.
- Frozen breastmilk can also be thawed by standing in a container of luke-warm water and used straight away.
- Only warm refrigerated breastmilk once and discard any that is left over.
- Never microwave breastmilk.

### Tips

- Sterilise the bottles and pumps by boiling or steam sterilisation methods.
- Leftover expressed milk from feeding should be discarded.





## Acknowledgements

This fact sheet is consistent with current Infant Feeding Guidelines and Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia, as produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

It is also based on information drawn heavily from:

- Infant and Toddler Feeding Guide, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District, 2004.
- Breastfeeding: A Simple Guide to Help You Establish Breastfeeding, Community Child Health Service, Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District, 2004.
- Growing Strong: Feeding You and Your Baby, Public Health Services, Queensland Health, 2003.
- Optimal Infant Nutrition: Evidence Based Guidelines 2003-2008, Queensland Health, 2003.

This fact sheet is also the result of input and effort from many health professionals in Queensland. Their help with the content is greatly appreciated.

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<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/child&youth/factsheets>.

