

# breastfeeding at study or work

Information for  
employees and  
employers



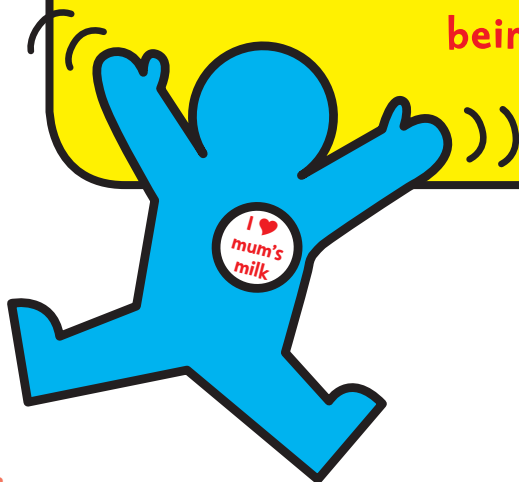
unicef 

start  
4 life   
A good start for a healthier life

# welcome to our guide to breastfeeding at study or work

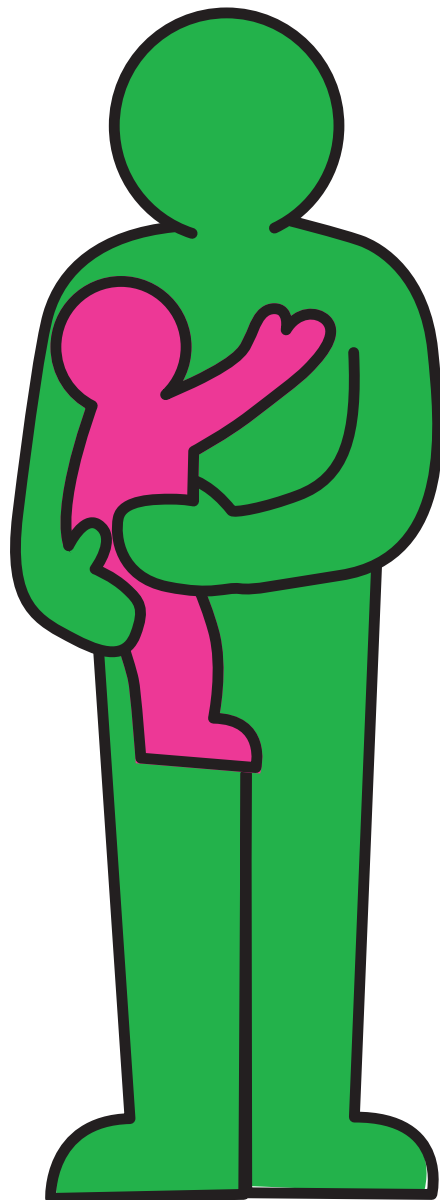
Going back to study or work may be the first time you have been separated from your baby for long periods. Continuing to breastfeed helps to keep the close relationship you've built up, providing your baby with extra comfort and security for as long as you both want.

Mums often find that continuing to breastfeed makes it easier to cope with being separated during the day.



# Key facts to show why mum's milk is still important

- The longer you breastfeed, the greater the health benefits for you and your baby.
- It naturally uses up to 500 calories a day.
- It saves money – formula feeding can cost as much as £45 a month.
- Breastfeeding after the first few months is still important to your baby's health because your milk continues to protect your baby from infections.
- It's good for you too, as it continues to protect you from breast and ovarian cancer.
- Giving your baby a breastfeed after a busy day helps you and your baby unwind.
- Even when you are no longer fully breastfeeding, one or two breastfeeds a day will still benefit your baby's health.



# how can i continue breastfeeding while working?

Here are some ways it could work for you:

- Have childcare close to your work or college, so that you can breastfeed during breaks or before and after work.
- Breastfeed at home and express milk (taking milk from your breast by hand or using a pump) so that your baby's carer can feed your baby while you are at work.
- Combine breastfeeding and formula feeding so your baby's carer can give your baby infant formula while you are at work.
- Talk to your employer about flexible working hours.

When you write to your employer to let them know that you are returning to work, you also need to let them know you are breastfeeding and want to express milk or breastfeed during the time you are at work. This is so they can make plans to support you.

## Expressing milk at work

You can express milk by hand or by using a manual or an electric pump. Ask at the local breastfeeding drop-in how other mums are doing it. They will also be able to tell you about the different pumps that are available and how they get on with the different types.

With just a little practice, hand expressing can be easier than using a machine so it's a good idea to start expressing a few weeks before returning to study or work to see what works for you.

It can take a little while to get used to what you have to do and you can see how long it takes to express milk.

### How often & how much?

How often you express milk and for how long is up to you. But as a guide, try to express milk as often as your baby usually feeds.

# Storing breast milk

Make sure all equipment is sterilised before you start. Milk should be stored in the back of a fridge and always transported/carried home in a cool bag with frozen ice packs, if possible. There is more information on how to express and store breast milk here [www.nhs.uk/planners/breastfeeding/pages/expressing-breast-milk.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/planners/breastfeeding/pages/expressing-breast-milk.aspx)

If you don't have access to a fridge, ask your employer if there is one, for example, in the first aid room. Your milk can be stored in the fridge for up to 5 days at 4°C or lower (usually at the back).

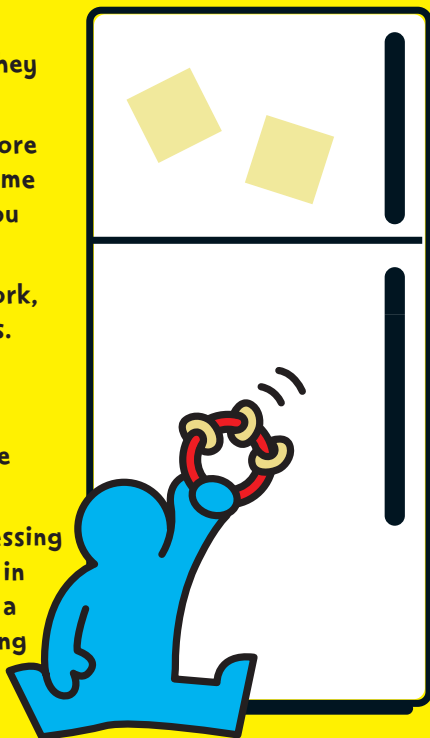
Breast milk can be stored for up to 2 weeks in the ice compartment of a fridge or for up to 6 months in a freezer.

Defrost frozen breast milk in the fridge and once thawed use it straight away. If preferred, you can heat it to body temperature before feeding.

Breast milk should never be re-frozen.

## Useful tips

- Try out different containers so you know they won't leak when defrosting or travelling.
- Label and date expressed breast milk before putting it in the fridge or freezer. Have some milk in the freezer as a back-up to help you through the first few weeks.
- In the week or two before returning to work, have a trial run of your care arrangements.
- Be prepared by keeping an extra top and some breastpads at college or work.
- Defrost frozen breast milk overnight in the fridge to take to the baby's carer.
- If you're using milk within 5 days of expressing it, it's better to store it in the fridge than in the freezer. This means milk expressed on a Friday at work can be used on the following Monday without needing to freeze it.



# what can you expect from your employer?

Employers should have a policy to support you to carry on breastfeeding. The policy may include:

- flexible breaks so that mothers can express milk;
- provision of a clean, warm and private space for expressing;
- where possible, access to a fridge to store expressed milk or space for your own coolbag and icepacks; and
- flexible working hours.

Ask if your employer has a policy supporting breastfeeding before you start your maternity leave.

## What does the law say?

It's up to you to decide how long you want to give your baby your milk – your employer should support you to do this. Before you go back to study or work you need to let your college or employer know. They need to make sure they are doing what they can to help you carry on breastfeeding. This will include a risk assessment. Your employer must manage any risk to your health or your baby's health.

The Workplace Regulations and Approved Code of Practice require employers to provide suitable facilities for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to rest.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommends that it is good practice for employers to provide a private, healthy and safe environment for breastfeeding mothers to express and store milk. The toilets are not suitable to use for this purpose.

You can find out more on the HSE website, [www.hse.gov.uk/mothers](http://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers), or by phoning their helpline on 0845 345 0055. The HSE also publishes a useful guide, 'New and expectant mothers at work: A guide for employers' (HSG122), which can be purchased from [www.hsebooks.com](http://www.hsebooks.com) or 01787 881165.

# we are here to help you

## If you need to talk to someone about anything in this booklet, you can:

Speak to a trained volunteer by calling the National Breastfeeding Helpline on **0300 100 0212** – they can help with any questions or concerns you may have about returning to study or work.

You can also call the Maternity Action Advice Line on **0845 600 8533** to talk to the advisers.

Maternity Action is a group dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of all pregnant women, their partners and children from before conception through to the child's early years.

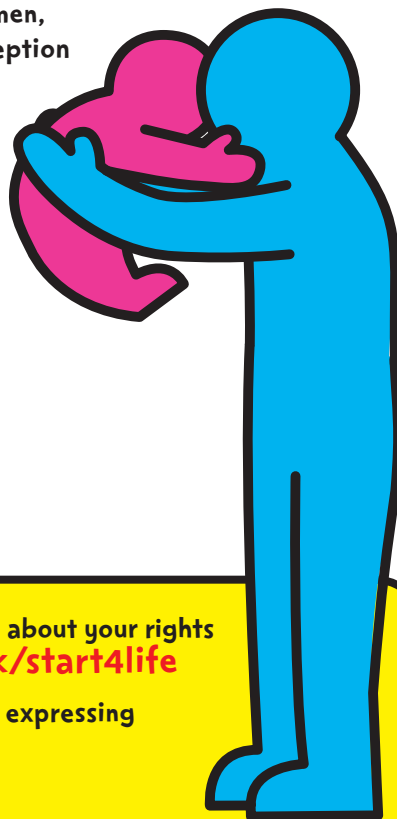
**[www.maternityaction.org.uk](http://www.maternityaction.org.uk)**

Download or order 'Pregnancy and work – what you need to know as an employee' from **[www.bis.gov.uk](http://www.bis.gov.uk)**

Download or order 'A guide for new and expectant mothers who work' from the HSE website **[www.hse.gov.uk/mothers](http://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers)**

The Start4Life website also has a good section about your rights as a breastfeeding employee. **[www.nhs.uk/start4life](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life)**

For general information about breastfeeding, expressing and sterilising equipment, look at:  
**[www.nhs.uk/breastfeeding](http://www.nhs.uk/breastfeeding)**



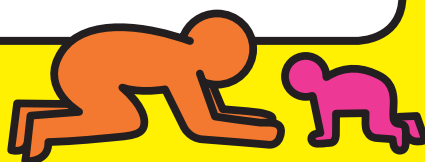
# Need help with anything else?

If you need to talk to someone about anything in this booklet, or anything to do with your baby's health, please ask.

## You can:

- Talk to your midwife or health visitor and ask them for one or both of the following booklets:
  - 'Off to the best start' – all about mum's milk and the early days with your new baby (C4L117)
  - 'Introducing solid foods' (C4L175)
- Call Start4Life on **0300 123 1021\*** or visit **[www.nhs.uk/start4life](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life)**
- Call the National Breastfeeding Helpline on **0300 100 0212\*** or visit **[www.nhs.uk/breastfeeding](http://www.nhs.uk/breastfeeding)**
- Visit your local Sure Start Children's Centre.

If you are a parent or carer of a baby aged 5–8 months then check out **[www.nhs.uk/babylifecheck](http://www.nhs.uk/babylifecheck)** and get some answers to those tricky questions we all have.



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\*Calls to 03 numbers should cost no more than geographic 01 or 02 calls and may be part of inclusive minutes subject to your provider and your call package. The National Breastfeeding Helpline is open from 9.30am to 9.30pm. The Start4Life lines are open from 9am to 8pm, 7 days a week.

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