

## **Connecticut WIC Program:**

# **Consistent Breastfeeding Education Messages: Pumping for Separation – Work/School**

### **Why is this important?**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women accounted for 47% of the total workforce in 2019. Many mothers in the United States return to work or school within a few weeks postpartum. Mothers who want to continue breastfeeding and providing expressed milk could benefit from education and support on how to prepare to return to work/school, and how to maintain an adequate milk supply during that time. Therefore, information on how to pump, when to pump, and what type of pump to use is invaluable to WIC moms who are separated from their infants during the workday.

***[For more information and support on Exclusive Pumping, please refer to Content Sheet Pumping for Medical Reasons]***

\*If links in this content sheet do not work, try disconnecting from the CT-WIC VPN

### **WIC's Goal:**

- To support mothers in meeting their breastfeeding goals.
- To empower moms to gain confidence in their ability to provide milk for their baby when returning to work/school.

**Use Make it Work checklist to review these talking points and so mom can visualize and reinforce her plan.**

**Objectives:** After participating in an individual counseling or group education session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the importance of bringing the baby to the breast when not separated.
2. Verbalize why continuing to breastfeed after returning to work/school is important to them.
3. Understand workplace breastfeeding laws.
4. Feel empowered to discuss breastfeeding/pumping with their employer during pregnancy.
5. Understand how to optimize their milk supply in the early weeks postpartum.
6. Obtain a pump through insurance (if desired) and learn how to use it prior to going back to work (BTW) or back to school (BTS).
7. Learn how to hand express.
8. Gain confidence in their ability to maintain lactation after returning to work/school.
9. Store and use milk safely.
10. Discuss essential information with her infant's caregiver(s) when she returns to work or school.
11. Develop a support system for BTW/BTS and pumping within their individual situation.
12. Incorporate quick, easy, nutritious meals and snacks for BTW/BTS.

**Affirmation:** "You are a great mom for being dedicated to giving your baby your breast milk!" Praise her for her efforts in any small steps she has taken.

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### **Key Educational Messages:**

- **Ask mom about her breastfeeding goals for BTW/BTS.** Why is this important to her? If mom seems overwhelmed with her current work/home situation, listen to her concerns. Ask her to take a step back to think about why continuing to provide her milk is important to her. Validate her feelings and support her decisions.
- **Discuss how to manage breastfeeding in the early weeks to assure an optimum milk supply.** (Objective #5)
- **Find out if she has been shown how to hand express her milk.** If she has not, show her how to by using a demonstration breast and/or showing a video. (Objective #7)
  - <https://www.readysbabyonline.com/the-first-hours/hand-expression/#content-container>
- **Encourage her to have a conversation prenatally with her employer (supervisor) outlining her intent to continue to provide breastmilk for her baby as she returns to work.** Discuss various on-line resources that may be helpful to her. Provide the sample *Letter to Employer* (included at the end of the content sheet). She may want to provide this letter to her employer, since it outlines the need to pump on a regular basis during the workday and take advantage of existing breaks. Help mom identify break time and duration as well as the location that will be used for expression. (Objectives #3 and 4)
- **Encourage her to have a conversation prenatally with her school nurse, guidance counselor, or social worker that outlines her intent to continue to provide breastmilk for her baby.** This discussion may include topics such as availability of space to use a breast pump, space to store a pump and breastmilk, and overall care for the pump and its parts. Mom may want to take her lunch break and any study halls she may have available into consideration.
- **Discuss how to contact her insurance company to obtain an electric breast pump for BTW/BTS.** Discuss the procedure for applying for a pump through WIC after the baby is born if she is denied a pump through her insurance. (Objective #6) *Refer to the WIC 300-12 Breast Pump policy in the State Plan.*
- **Discuss her plan for returning to work including when to start pumping and storing expressed milk and how often to pump (ideally, approximately 2 weeks prior to her return).** Encourage her to become comfortable using her pump. <https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/expressing-and-pumping-milk>
  - Review a letdown to pump vs. baby skin to skin at the breast.
  - Review appropriate flange fit:
    - <https://www.ameda.com/milk-101/milk-101-article/yes-size-matters-how-flange-size-can-make-or-break-pumping/> (may not work with CT-WIC VPN)
    - <https://www.amedadirect.com/skin/frontend/ameda/ameda/pdf/making-the-most-of-yours-breast-pump.pdf>
  - If possible, start to store breastmilk in the freezer to in small amounts she will need for the first few days she is separated from her baby. This can help increase confidence. Encourage her to pump a few times per day after a feeding and/or at one breast. If she is exclusively breastfeeding at the breast it is normal to express small amounts since she is not skipping feedings. Praise her for this and reassure her that when she is separated from the baby she will pump more as she will be skipping feedings.
  - Discuss a realistic pumping plan with mom for when she is at work. Also review where she will store her expressed milk at work, e.g. a refrigerator or a cooler bag with an ice pack (many moms are most comfortable with this).

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- **Discuss the caregiver’s role in providing expressed breastmilk.** Provide education resources to the caregiver as necessary. If possible, allow the baby and caregiver to spend time together prior to the first day returning to work. This helps facilitate a smoother transition. Discuss paced bottle feedings by the caregiver to slow the baby down to prevent over-feeding, and the difference between milk flow from the breast vs. bottle. Consider the potential for cup feeding expressed breastmilk. (Objectives #10-11)
  - Include education on avoiding overfeeding by using horizontal feeding technique, slow flow nipple, and cue-based (baby paced) feedings. <https://kellymom.com/bf/pumpingmoms/feeding-tools/bottle-feeding/>
  - Help mom troubleshoot. For example, if the caregiver keeps running out of breastmilk, is it due to the caregiver discarding some because too much is in each bottle and the baby cannot finish it? Is it due to the caregiver over feeding the baby? Options would be to provide the childcare provider small serving sizes of breastmilk.
  - **Review or email a copy of Tips for Starting Your Baby in Childcare: A Toolkit for Parents** [https://www.itsworthitct.org/uploads/7/6/2/7/76278053/breastfeeding\\_child\\_care\\_toolkit\\_mom\\_2-6-19.pdf](https://www.itsworthitct.org/uploads/7/6/2/7/76278053/breastfeeding_child_care_toolkit_mom_2-6-19.pdf)
- **Discuss how to maintain a milk supply after returning to work.**
  - Explain how to calculate her “Magic Number”. This refers to the number of times the mother needs to remove milk from her breasts in order to maintain her milk production. It accounts for both feedings at the breast and pumping sessions. Review the article from Nancy Mohrbacher which discusses how to explain the “Magic Number” to moms that are pumping during the work or school day.
  - Ask if feeding baby at breast while at work is an option.
  - If the mom has hard time expressing milk or the baby does not like the bottle of expressed milk, consider reverse cycle nursing, this is when dyad does most of their feeding during mom’s off work hours and usually is a shift from daytime feeding focus to night time feeding focused. Not many moms need implement reverse cycle nursing, but it is an option for some.
  - Provide reassurance that she will not need to keep increasing the amount that she pumps as the baby grows from one to six months. By one month for most moms, *normally*, milk supply is established. Refer to health care provider or outpatient IBCLC, if mom is dealing with true low milk supply issues.
  - Remind her that when her baby starts solids her childcare provider can over solids, expressed breastmilk in a cup and that she maybe able to offer less breastmilk to the child care provider once the baby starts eating more solids and advances to table foods. This can take pressure off the mom to feel she is the sole food source for her baby when they are separated once solids have commenced.
- Review strategies to increase milk production:
  - Use hands on pumping. See link to Nancy Mohrbacher article. <http://www.nancymohrbacher.com/articles/2012/6/27/to-pump-more-milk-use-hands-on-pumping.html> (may not work with CT-WIC VPN)
  - Use all senses (looking at a picture of the baby, smell of baby’s clothes, music, etc.)
  - Increase daily total (breastfeed more and/or pump more)
  - Consider pumping in a.m. before work or at night after the baby is asleep if unable to pump more often at work.
  - If mom asks about galactagogues, refer to her health care provider or community IBCLC for more information. See *ABM (Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine) Protocol #9, 2011 ABM Clinical Protocol #9: Use of Galactagogues in Initiating or Augmenting the Rate of Maternal Milk Secretion.*

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<https://abm.memberclicks.net/assets/DOCUMENTS/PROTOCOLS/9-galactogogues-protocol-english.pdf>

- **Offer names and contact information of WIC staff, including but not limited to: Nutritionists, CLCs, IBCLCs and Peer Counselors (if applicable).**
  - Offer contact information of local support if available: Mother's support groups at local hospitals, La Leche League, etc. Encourage Mother to call with any questions/concerns/feedback/ideas. [www.ilca.org](http://www.ilca.org) or [www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org), <https://www.lllct.org/>

### **Activities:**

- Pump assembly demonstration by staff or participant
- Sample letter to employer; role-play conversation with supervisor or caregiver as applicable. <https://www.breastfeedingct.org/resources.html> (link under resources for Employed BF mothers - Sample letter)
- Group discussion on ways to improve pumping sessions at work. Provide a basket with different objects (picture, face cloth, onesies, CD with music etc.) Ask moms to choose an item from the basket and discuss how these objects could be used to make pumping at work/school more effective.

### **Websites:**

WIC Breastfeeding Support web resources: <https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/expressing-and-pumping-milk>, <https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/going-back-to-work>

It's Worth It website, <https://www.itsworthitct.org/make-it-work.html>

<https://www.readysbabyonline.com/back-to-work-or-school/using-a-pump/#content-container> (Ready, Set, Baby online)

[www.lowmilksupply.org](http://www.lowmilksupply.org) (Will not work with Internet Explorer. Use Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge)

[www.breastmilkcounts.com](http://www.breastmilkcounts.com) (May not work with CT-WIC VPN)

<https://lactationmatters.org/2014/12/30/working-and-breastfeeding-an-interview-with-nancy-mohrbacher/>

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-home-work-and-public/breastfeeding-and-going-back-work/business-case>

[breastfeedingmadesimple.com](http://breastfeedingmadesimple.com) (May not work with CT-WIC VPN)

<https://www.breastfeedingct.org/>

[www.workandpump.com](http://www.workandpump.com)

<http://www.breastfeedingpartners.org/>

<https://kellymom.com/bf/pumpingmoms/pumping/bf-links-pumping/>

### **Books:**

- *Milk Memos: How Real Moms Learned to Mix Business with Babies and You can Too* by Cate Colburn-Smith and Andrea Serrette
- *Working Without Weaning* by Kirsten Berggren
- *The Breastfeeding Mother's Guide to Making More Milk* by Diana West and Lisa Marasco
- *Balancing Breast and Bottle* by Amy Petersen and Mindy Harmer
- *Breastfeeding in Combat Boots* by Robyn Roche-Paull (military)

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### **Handouts/Resources:**

- Make a Plan checklist <https://www.itsworthitct.org/make-it-work.html>
- Tips for Starting Your Baby in Childcare: A Toolkit for Parents  
[https://www.itsworthitct.org/uploads/7/6/2/7/76278053/breastfeeding\\_child\\_care\\_toolkit\\_mom\\_2-6-19.pdf](https://www.itsworthitct.org/uploads/7/6/2/7/76278053/breastfeeding_child_care_toolkit_mom_2-6-19.pdf)
- Storage Guidelines from Make it Work checklist and WIC Policy 300-12
- Breastfeeding in Connecticut: What Are Your Rights? (DPH/CBC)  
[https://www.breastfeedingct.org/uploads/6/2/8/1/62815511/breastfeeding\\_flyer\\_english.pdf](https://www.breastfeedingct.org/uploads/6/2/8/1/62815511/breastfeeding_flyer_english.pdf)
- Healthy Eating on the Run: A Month of Tips (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics- AND)  
<https://www.eatright.org/~media/eatright%20files/nationalnutritionmonth/handoutsandtipsheets/nutritiontipsheets/healthyeatingontherun.ashx>
- Power Up With Breakfast (AND) <https://www.eatright.org/food/planning-and-prep/snack-and-meal-ideas/power-up-with-breakfast>

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SAMPLE LETTER\*

Dear Employer:

Since the birth of my child, I have decided to feed my child breast milk. Upon returning to work, I will need accommodations so I can continue to feed my child breast milk. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends infants be breastfed exclusively for 6 months and then for a period up to 1 year and beyond that as mutually acceptable for mother and child.

Statistics show that breastfed babies have fewer illnesses, which may result in less work missed, and fewer medical insurance claims. Companies that support breastfeeding mothers have higher retention rates and higher productivity. To provide food for my child and maintain an adequate milk supply, I plan to pump milk during the workday. For your convenience, I have referenced several web resources, which detail existing federal and state laws pertaining to breastfeeding employees. According to Connecticut State Law, all employers must provide breastfeeding employees with reasonable break time (during meal or break periods) and a private, non-bathroom space to express breast milk during the workday. Please find more information about the law at <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wgwkstnd/laws-regs/statute31-40w.htm>

My health care providers have instructed me to pump milk during the workday (as negotiated with my employer) to provide (or maintain) an adequate amount of milk for my baby. I hope you agree that everyone benefits from my decision to breastfeed: my child, myself, the workforce, and even the economy. I look forward to discussing how this will fit in with my workday. Please consult The Business Case for Breastfeeding for additional information at [https://owh-wh-d9-dev.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/documents/bcfb\\_easy-steps-to-supporting-breastfeeding-employees.pdf](https://owh-wh-d9-dev.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/documents/bcfb_easy-steps-to-supporting-breastfeeding-employees.pdf). If you would like more information, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,  
(Your Name)

Websites for your Reference:

- <http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/workplace-law>
- <https://worklifelaw.org/>

***\*You may customize this letter to meet your own needs. This is just a template letter and not mandated by the Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition***