

HOW AND WHEN SHOULD I INTRODUCE A BOTTLE TO MY BREASTFED INFANT, TO PREPARE FOR MY RETURN TO WORK?

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This is one of the most common questions we hear from breastfeeding moms who are planning to return to work. When should I give my baby a bottle for the first time? When do I pump? What bottle should I use? Making the transition from direct breastfeeding to a combination of breastfeeding and bottle-feeding can seem daunting. However, we are here not only to tell you that it can be done, but also to reassure you that many moms experience little to no issues alternating between breastfeeding at home and pumping/bottle-feeding expressed breastmilk while away from baby. We hope this information and guidance helps make this transition a smooth one for you, your baby, your partner, and your caregiver; but as always, please do not hesitate to visit our support group or schedule a consultation if you are having any problems!



When?

- Baby is 3-5 weeks old
- At least 1-2 weeks before you return to work
- Baby is calm, happy, alert
- Baby is not super hungry [either in between feedings or at first signs of hunger, not crying]
- You have time, aren't rushed [not right before an appointment or if you need to leave soon]

How?

1. Gather Milk: Choose a time in the morning, when you are most full, and pump after your baby breastfeeds. You may not get much (maybe 1/2 oz), but after a few days, you'll have roughly 3oz, enough for the first bottle.
2. Choose a Bottle: We recommend a bottle with a slow-flow nipple and one that has a wide base and a shorter nipple, so as to more closely resemble your own anatomy. This link has some good information and recommendations: [{link}](#)
3. Learn about paced bottle feeding and optimal positioning for bottle-feeding in a breastfeeding friendly manner. We love this video! [{link}](#)
4. Have your partner or someone else give baby the first few bottles. Babies can smell their moms and usually will not want to take those first few bottles from mom, since they would prefer to breastfeed.
5. Be patient! It might take a few attempts for baby to get the hang of it.
6. Offer the bottle a few times a week to give you practice at mastering the pump and your baby practice at getting comfortable with the bottle.

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