

I never imagined I would be able to breastfeed my first baby without supplementing him with formula. Before my delivery, I read a lot about breastfeeding and pretty sure that I would breastfeed him. I had a pretty bad start with breastfeeding. I had sore nipples for 2 weeks and could not breastfeed him directly because it was so painful. I had to pump milk for his every feeding. Despite the problem I never bought an infant formula for my son. I did not know why, I never thought of buying one at that time. My husband and my mother were against the formula. I did give up but my family was there to support me to continue breastfeed my baby. Two weeks before going back to work, I was thinking of starting to give him formula but I could not bear myself to see him drinking milk other than mine. I did buy an infant formula though. But my sister in law insisted that I continue breastfeeding and not supplement my baby with formula. She had bad experience with formula feeding since her first child was fully bottle-fed and encountered several health problems such as asthma and allergy. At that moment, I searched for information about working and breastfeeding and read a lot about it. Let me share with you my journey towards my success as a breastfeeding working mom.

Two weeks before going back to work:

- Teach baby to drink expressed breast milk (EBM) in a bottle. Try different types of teats if baby keeps refusing the bottle. You can also try to cup feed your baby. Or in worse case scenario to spoon-feed him.
- Let the father or someone else feed the baby with the bottle. Baby can sense that mother is still at home, so try not to be at home for a few hours to train the baby.
- To prepare EBM stock for at least 10 to 20 bottles. This is to avoid panic in case the baby is going through growth spurts and you cannot meet his demand. Prepare 3 to 4 ounces for each bottle so that you will not waste your milk if the baby does not finish the whole bottle. You can also prepare 1 to 2 ounces in a few bottles for his snack.
- To nurse him more often to maintain your milk supply.
- To make sure you have a good pump to be used when at work.
- To talk to your superior about your desire to have time for several pumping sessions at work.

My routine after going back to work: **My first baby** (Aniq Noah Khan)

- 6.30 a.m Express milk before he woke up
- 7.00 a.m Baby wakes up. Nurse him
- 8.30 a.m Nurse baby in the car on the way to my mother's house
- 10.30 a.m First pumping session. I used the Medela Mini Electric Breast Pump. Able to pump 4 oz
- 1.30 p.m Second pumping session. Able to pump 4 oz.
- 4.00 p.m Third pumping session. Able to get 4 oz.
- 5.30 p.m Picked baby up and nursed him straight away.

## BREASTFEEDING AND WORKING: A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

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- At home, prepared a quick dinner and spent the rest of the night nursing him which was enjoyable for me.

### **My second baby:** Khayrin Aniqah Khan

I had an easier start since I have had experience before. I had easier pumping session since I was using double pump (Medela Mini Electric Plus).

- 6.30 a.m      Baby wakes up. Nurse her
- 8.30 a.m      Nurse baby again before going off to work
- 11.30 a.m     First pumping session. Able to pump 10 to 12 oz.
- 3.30 p.m      Second pumping session. Able to pump 8 to 10 oz.
- 5.30 p.m      Reached home and nurse her straight away.
- At home, prepared a quick dinner and spent the rest of the night nursing.

My second baby had a problem with taking EBM in the bottles. She was being spoon-fed by the sitter from 2 months old to 4 months. She could only finish 2 to 3 bottles of EBM per day. She was growing well and seldom got sick. She nursed more at night; 8 to 10 feedings and took less EBM during the day. Some babies prefer to wait for their mommies to come home to drink their milk. Therefore, they usually take less EBM during daytime. Some will nurse frequently at night and less during the day. This is called reverse cycle feeding. Many mothers who have problems pumping at work will choose this option. As long as the baby is growing well and feed well, this approach is acceptable.

For working mothers out there who are thinking of continuing to breastfeed their babies, I would suggest you plan ahead of time before you start returning to work. Planning a head of time will give you plenty of time to stockpile your EBM and maintain your milk supply. Moreover, your baby will get use to your routine when the time comes for your temporary separation with your baby.

There is no reason for working moms to stop breastfeeding their babies because the benefits outweigh the challenges and the problems. Anybody can take care of your baby but you are the only one who can nourish him with your own mother's milk.

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2. Optimizing Your Milk Supply After Returning to Work or School, Becky Flora, IBCLC, [www.breastfeed-essential.com](http://www.breastfeed-essential.com)

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Mom's Little Ones