

Hillcrest Guide for Breastfeeding Moms

Working and pumping breast milk for your baby can be a big challenge for new moms. Hillcrest strives to support our families in meeting their breastfeeding goals, whatever those may be. The daily process of getting milk into the bottles and into your baby is a team operation. The staff and parents of Hillcrest have a ton of experience, and we are here to help. This handout is a collection of tips and resources for nursing moms heading back to work.

During Maternity Leave

-Establishing Breastfeeding This is your primary job in the first few weeks. Take care of yourself. Accept all help, and ask for more. Rest, heal, and nurse, nurse, nurse.

-Lactation Consultants Make use of their help early and often. Nursing is “natural,” yes, but that doesn’t mean it’s easy in the beginning. It is a learned skill for new moms, and many newborns are shockingly bad at it. A good lactation consultant can help you solve and prevent problems during one of the most vulnerable and exhausting moments of your life. If you are not happy or comfortable with yours, find a new one right away.

-Introducing bottles Somewhere in the 3-6 week range is ideal for trying out baby’s first bottle. A 2-oz bottle of pumped milk is a good place to start. Often this goes better if your partner, a friend, or Grandma offers the bottle while you go on a short outing outside the house. A bottle once a week or every few days is enough to keep baby familiar until it’s time to come to Hillcrest.

<http://www.workandpump.com/bottles.htm>

-Paced Bottle Feeding Bottles are a lot less work for babies than nursing. Paced bottle feeding mimics breastfeeding and helps prevent baby from taking more milk from the bottle than she would at the breast. This is a great video explaining how and why:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UH4T70OSzGs>

-Pumping during leave There is a bit of a “Freezer Stash” myth that moms need to stockpile enormous amounts of milk before going back to work. Pump at least every few days to put a little in the freezer. All you need in the freezer before you start work is a 2-3 day supply to cover emergencies like spilled milk, milk you left out on your desk at the office overnight, etc. Generally speaking, baby should be fed the amount you pump each day, not milk you pumped before starting back to work. In this way, your body and baby stay in sync so you can maintain your healthy supply.

<http://www.workandpump.com/freezerstash.htm>

-Pacifiers The unfairly maligned pacifier can be an extremely useful tool in supporting working/pumping goals. We recommend introducing one around 2-4 weeks of age, after breastfeeding is well established. Current research shows that pacifier use does not harm breastfeeding success:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19464025>

Starting at Hillcrest: Working and Pumping

The Supply Side

-Pump options You have two main choices: Buy a double electric pump (probably the Medela Pump in Style or Ameda Purely Yours) or go straight for the best equipment and rent a “hospital grade” pump. Either way, the Affordable Care Act requires your insurance to pay the cost of one pump per child.

<https://www.healthcare.gov/coverage/breast-feeding-benefits/>

-A second pump (could be an inexpensive manual pump) can be helpful for home. An extra pumping session in the evening and once during the day on weekends can add a few extra ounces, and hauling a pump back and forth to work is annoying. Plus there is nothing worse than arriving at work and realizing you left a critical piece of your pump at home.

-Finding your routine Three times per day for 20 minutes is typical. Many moms find pump output is better if they look at photos or video of baby while pumping, especially in the early days when your body is “learning” to let down with the pump instead of the baby.

-Where to pump The easiest place is right at your desk if your work space is private. This may require a lock on your door or a big DO NOT DISTURB sign, or both, depending on your workplace and your coworkers’ level of cluelessness. If you do not have your own private space at your job, your employer is required to provide one that is private and free from intrusion by your coworkers. If you are having trouble with this, address it immediately, in the first days back at work. Missing pumping sessions in the early days can cause a quick dip in supply. <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs73.htm>

Visiting Hillcrest to Nurse some moms choose to visit Hillcrest to nurse on their lunch breaks. This removes one pumping session from your day, and reduces the amount of pumped milk you need to send. Coordinate your schedule with Miss Renae so she knows exactly when to expect you each day and can time feedings accordingly. Some moms find that the interruption to the work day and the extra travel is too much. Experiment in the early weeks and find out what works best for you.

-The big question: HOW MUCH MILK? Sadly breasts don’t come with volume gauges, and your baby won’t tell you how many ounces he takes each time he nurses. However, researchers have used very precise scales to weigh babies before and after feedings over many months to answer this question. The studies show that nursing babies require 1-1.5 oz per hour away from mom. Babies vary, and an appropriate range is 8-15 total oz for a typical full work day.

<http://kellymom.com/bf/pumpingmoms/pumping/milkcalc/>

-This same research shows that the amount of milk consumed at each feeding does not change from 1-6 months of age. Intake stays generally constant, then gradually decreases after 6 months as solid food increases (varies by child). The composition of your milk changes to meet baby’s needs as she gets older. For older babies, the same number of ounces contain more fat and calories. So the amount you establish early on will be enough for your baby throughout your pumping days.

<http://www.workandpump.com/bottlesize.htm>

-Dips in Supply If your pump output decreases or you are falling a couple of ounces short: Good hydration, good nutrition, sufficient sleep, and taking good care of yourself all help keep your supply strong. Pump maintenance is important—output can decrease if your flanges are not “sealing” properly. Fenugreek supplements increase output for many women. You can also add evening/weekend pump sessions at home to make up for a small deficit during the week. A “pump slump” around 8 months is very common.

http://kellymom.com/bf/pumpingmoms/pumping/pumping_decrease/

-Freezer stash maintenance Rotate your frozen milk. When you remove milk, take the oldest bag, and try to put an equal amount back over the next few days. Building a freezer stash slowly with an extra bag or two a week is a good sign that everything is going fantastically, but if you never pump more than exactly what your baby drinks, that’s ok too.

-Supplementing with freezer milk “Borrowing” from your freezer stash without replacing the milk can reduce your milk supply, as explained above in the “Maternity Leave” section. The younger your baby, the more important it is to ensure the amount you pump and the amount baby drinks each day remains more or less the same.

-Supplementing with formula is a great option for many families, and there are often very good reasons to go this route. Some moms reach a point where formula is a relief from the huge burden of pumping and working. Others strongly prefer to avoid supplementation to prevent drops in their milk supply for the entire first year. We will work with you and communicate about the options and support you in your decisions.

The Delivery Side

-Bottle refusal Some babies really don’t like bottles at first. The “bottles” link above includes many tips on helping baby accept an occasional bottle before starting daycare, and we highly recommend working on this in the 3-6 week range. If baby is still having trouble when the child starts at Hillcrest, rest assured that we have been through this before and we have lots of tricks.

-Bottle preference On the other hand, some babies discover that bottles are easier than nursing and develop a bottle preference. This can be equally frustrating for mom. Paced bottle feeding is a good method to prevent and minimize this issue. Often things are a bumpy for a week or so as baby learns to switch between breast and bottle. The best thing you can do is to calmly continue to offer only nursing when you are with baby—no bottles—until baby figures out that both methods work and she can go back and forth. Most breastfed babies should use slow flow newborn nipples throughout their bottle-feeding days.

-Avoiding overfeeding A major key to supporting your milk supply is matching the amount you pump with the amount we feed at Hillcrest. Steps we take to keep baby happy and healthy without promoting baby “demand” that outpaces your supply:

-Paced bottle feeding, especially during the first month or so in care when baby's habits for consuming pumped milk are being established. [See video link above.] Once a routine is set where baby is happily consuming a certain number ounces each day, this becomes less important.

-Small feedings. Please provide milk in 2-4 oz servings to start. The infant teachers will work with you to arrive at a good sustainable system over the first several weeks. We will never increase single feedings above 4-6 oz at a maximum for infants 1-5 months and 4-8 oz maximum for 6-11 months unless requested. <http://www.workandpump.com/bottlesize.htm>

-For infants 0-5 months, we need 3 bottles of 4-6 ounces each, and for infants 6-11 months we need at least 3 bottles (2 bottles of 2-4 oz and 1 bottle of 6 oz).

-Pacifier use. Babies like to suck. Breastfed babies are notorious for wanting to suck on a bottle long after their tummies are full. Pacifiers help keep many babies happy.

-Sleep. A fussy baby is often an overtired baby, not a hungry baby. Providing adequate daytime sleep is one of the biggest challenges for young babies in a group care setting. We will use swaddling, baby swings, pacifier, careful attention to baby's sleepy cues, and whatever other tools in our power to help baby get sufficient daytime sleep.

-Starting solids. The latest guidelines on allergy suggest introducing complimentary solid foods in the window of 4-6 months of age. For babies who are ready and interested in solids around 4-5 months, adding some calories through baby cereals and caloric veggies during the school day sometimes helps relieve the pressure on mom to pump extra ounces. For an extremely detailed analysis of the "ideal" timing for starting solids, see: <http://scienceofmom.com/2015/05/14/starting-solids-4-months-6-months-or-somewhere-in-between/>

-Teething biscuits work very well for some babies—they are fun to chew on and play with and can sometimes reduce the demand for more bottles.

Though every baby is unique and each family's path is a bit different, know that at Hillcrest you are surrounded by other parents who have walked in your shoes and a staff who cares enormously about you and your baby. Do not be afraid to ask for help, reassurance, or suggestions at any time.