

MUMSAGA

Return-to-Work Pumping Guide

"You've got this, mama. One pump at a time."



- ✦ Your rights are protected
- ✦ Your schedule can work
- ✦ Your mental health matters

Your Legal Rights

Federal and state laws protect your right to pump at work. Here's what you need to know.

FLSA / PUMP Act (Federal)

Employers must provide reasonable break time **and** a private, non-bathroom space to pump for up to **1 year** after birth. The PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act extends protections to cover most salaried and hourly employees.

State Laws

Many states offer **stronger protections** than the federal minimum — including extended pumping duration, paid break time, or additional workplace accommodations. Check your state's Department of Labor website for details.

What "Private Space" Means

A dedicated room that **locks** or can be secured — not a bathroom stall. It must be shielded from view and free from intrusion. It should include a flat surface and access to electricity.

Talking to HR

You have the right to request accommodations **in writing**. Keep a copy of all communications. HR must respond in a reasonable timeframe. Document everything — it protects you.

💡 **Tip:** Download your state's lactation accommodation law summary from your state DOL website before your first day back. Having it on hand gives you confidence and clarity.

Your Workday Pumping Schedule

Most pumping parents need to pump every 2–3 hours to maintain supply. Here's a sample schedule to adapt to your day.

TIME	SESSION	DURATION	NOTES
7:00 AM	Morning pump (home)	15–20 min	Before leaving
9:30 AM	Pump #1 at work	15–20 min	Book room in advance
12:00 PM	Pump #2 at work	15–20 min	During lunch break
2:30 PM	Pump #3 at work	15–20 min	Afternoon session
5:30 PM	Evening pump (home)	15–20 min	After commute

My Custom Schedule

Use the lines below to plan your own pumping schedule. Write in what works for you.

TIME	LOCATION	DURATION	NOTES

Your Portable Pumping Kit

A well-packed kit means less stress and fewer forgotten items. Here's your master checklist.

Pump & Parts

- ☐ Breast pump (fully charged or with adapter)
- ☐ All pump parts (flanges, valves, membranes, tubing)
- ☐ Extra set of pump parts (backup!)
- ☐ Car adapter (if you pump during commute)

Milk Storage

- ☐ Breast milk storage bags (labeled with name & date)
- ☐ 4–6 collection bottles with lids
- ☐ Insulated cooler bag with ice packs
- ☐ Permanent marker for labeling

Comfort & Hygiene

- ☐ Hands-free pumping bra
- ☐ Nursing pads (leak protection)
- ☐ Nipple cream / lanolin
- ☐ Fragrance-free wipes for quick clean
- ☐ Small towel or cloth

Comfort & Self-Care

- ☐ Refillable water bottle (hydration matters!)
- ☐ Healthy snack (oats, nuts, lactation cookies)
- ☐ A photo or video of baby (helps with letdown)

Handling Interruptions & Storage

When Plans Change at Work

Meetings run long, calls come in, schedules shift. Here's how to protect your pumping time.

Block your calendar: Mark pumping sessions as "Focus Time" or "Unavailable" — you don't owe anyone a reason.

Set an auto-responder: A brief "I'm unavailable for 20 minutes" message prevents interruptions before they happen.

Communicate once, clearly: Let your manager know your schedule at the start. One clear conversation is better than repeated explanations.

Give yourself grace: A missed session happens. Pump when you can. Your supply is resilient.

Storing Milk Safely at Work

Follow these guidelines to keep your milk fresh and safe.

Storage Location	Safe Duration
Room temperature (up to 77°F)	Up to 4 hours
Insulated cooler bag with ice packs	Up to 24 hours
Office refrigerator	Up to 4 days
Office freezer	Up to 6 months

💡 **Tip:** Always label bags with your name and pumping date/time. Store in the back of the fridge where it stays coldest.

Mental Health & Gentle Reminders

You're Allowed to Feel All of It

Returning to work while breastfeeding is one of the most demanding things a parent can do. Anxiety, grief, guilt, and pride can all coexist. That is not contradiction — that is motherhood.

"Rest is productive."

Taking a moment during a pump session to breathe deeply is not wasted time.

"Asking for help is strength."

Lean on your partner, your employer's EAP, a lactation consultant, or a support group.

"Fed and loved is the goal."

Whether you pump for 2 weeks or 2 years — every drop counts, and every choice is valid.

Resources: La Leche League (llli.org) • Postpartum Support International (postpartum.net) • WIC Breastfeeding Support (wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov)

Remember, Always

You are doing something extraordinary.

It's okay if some days are harder than others.

Your career and your motherhood can coexist.

Your body is still nourishing your baby.

You don't need to justify your pumping breaks.

MumSaga is cheering for you, every step of the way. ❤️