

Plan for Returning to Work

There's no one answer about whether to return to work after baby's arrival, when to return to work, and how to juggle the responsibilities. These are just some questions to get you thinking. To learn more about:

What the early weeks and months with a new baby will be like: Read chapters 16 – 20 of [Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn](#).

Info on Returning to Work: [A working parent's survival guide](#).

Info on Staying Home: [What research says about being a stay-at-home mom / parent](#).

Returning to Work?

- When would you need to return to work from leave? Will you have to return to full-time immediately or can you ease back in?
- Can you (or your partner) work part-time or job-share? Can (either of) you work from home?
- What are the costs of returning to work? These may include clothing, transportation, child care, convenience foods, and more visits to your baby's caregiver. (Your baby may become sick more often from exposure to ill children in child care.)
- Will your income exceed the total costs of working outside the home and make working worthwhile?
- Are there other benefits of work (like professional advancement, passion for work, or desire for connections outside the home) that make it worth working no matter what the financial impacts?
- What can you do to ease the process of returning to work? (Ask co-workers for advice on how they manage working and parenting.)

Stay Home?

- Can you afford not to work for a while?
- Can you simplify your lifestyle and lower your cost of living to offset the loss of income?
- If you're not working, would you qualify for any low income programs (such as CHIP, WIC, subsidized health insurance, etc.)
- If you take a year or so off, what impact would that have on your career?
- Are there things (other than money) that you would miss about your work?

Juggling It All

- How will the parent who works feel about the other parent staying at home, and vice versa?
- How will you divide up the responsibilities of work, baby care and home chores? Do you see potential challenges or resentments that could build up if you don't account for them in advance?
- Think about the logistics of coordinating your job, baby care, and other responsibilities. What will be the biggest challenges?