

# Going back to work after a leave



Many people take a leave of absence from work at some point. It could be for a life event, such as maternity or paternity leave, or because of an illness. A leave of absence is usually an extended period of time off that goes beyond vacation or other type of leave.

No matter how long your leave is, going back to work can be a big adjustment and cause you plenty of anxiety. But, you can make the transition smoother if you prepare for your new routine. Try these tips:

- **Get organized.** A week or two before you go back, start jotting down things you will need to do every day. Whether it's packing lunches, walking the dog or dropping kids off at daycare, it helps to have it all written down to feel more in control of the situation. You can then create a schedule or to-do list which helps make it more manageable.

- **Start moving back to your work schedule.** It can be quite a shock to go back to a 6 a.m. work shift if you've been staying up late. At least two weeks before you go back, start transitioning your sleep schedule. Give your body time to adjust to getting up at that same time and change your bedtime accordingly. Aim for seven to eight hours of sleep so you can feel rested and productive.
- **Allow for extra time in the morning.** Set your alarm for earlier than you think you need to. You'll be glad to have the extra time without rushing in the morning. Or, you may find that it takes you longer to get ready than you thought.
- **Talk with your supervisor before going back.** You can discuss your specific job duties and schedule. And, you can touch base about any changes or updates that may have taken place while you were gone. This could save you time and stress on your first day back.

- **Discuss breastfeeding in advance.** Moms who plan to pump breastmilk at work should ask their supervisor or human resources department about this before going back. Come up with a pumping schedule that works for you and your employer. Discuss where you can pump. You'll need a clean and private area with access to a sink.



Going back to work can be less stressful with some planning and open discussion with your employer. Don't wait until you go back to deal with these questions and details.