

Training Supervisors and Staff



Introduction



Balancing work and family is an important priority for all employees. When an employee who has decided to nurse her baby returns to work after maternity leave, time and space to express milk during the work day help that individual to continue to give the best to both work and baby.

These family-friendly benefits also bring a return on investment through lower health care costs, lower employee absenteeism rates, lower turnover rates, and higher employee productivity and loyalty.

Understanding the value of breastmilk helps to frame the discussion of why it is important to support breastfeeding employees. The World Health Organization (2016) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for six months. Thereafter, infants should receive complementary foods with continued breastfeeding up to two years of age or older.

Benefits of Breastfeeding



Benefits of human milk to mom and baby:

- Lower risk of infections and illness for babies.
- Faster recovery from birth and lower risk of certain cancers for the breastfeeding employee.

Benefits to workplace:

- More than 90% of mothers in our region begin breastfeeding after birth (CDC, 2014). When they return to work, a supportive environment will encourage productivity and higher job satisfaction.
- Workplace support for employees who want to breastfeed or express milk results in a 3:1 return on investment through:
 - Lower health care costs
 - Lower turnover rates
 - Lower absenteeism rates (Babies fed human milk are healthier, and their parents are less likely to miss work. One-day absences occur half as often among parents who feed their infant human milk.)
 - Increased productivity and company loyalty
 - Improved ability of employer to recruit and retain talent (HRSA, 2008)

Not only is supporting mothers in the workplace beneficial, it is the law.



Minnesota statute: 181.939 NURSING MOTHERS.

(a) An employer must provide reasonable unpaid break time each day to an employee who needs to express breast milk for her infant child. The break time must, if possible, run concurrently with any break time already provided to the employee. An employer is not required to provide break time under this section if to do so would unduly disrupt the operations of the employer.

(b) The employer must make reasonable efforts to provide a room or other location, in close proximity to the work area, other than a bathroom or a toilet stall, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public and that includes access to an electrical outlet, where the employee can express her milk in privacy. The employer would be held harmless if reasonable effort has been made.

(c) For the purposes of this section, "employer" means a person or entity that employs one or more employees and includes the state and its political subdivisions.

(d) An employer may not retaliate against an employee for asserting rights or remedies under this section.

Breastfeeding Support Policy



Organization Name has worked to develop supportive policies and practices that enable employees to successfully return to work while breastfeeding. These practices send a message to all employees that breastfeeding is valued.

We ask that supervisors make reasonable accommodations to help employees reach their goals for milk collection and breastfeeding. These practices encourage other employees to exhibit a positive and accepting attitude.

What employees need to know:

- Location of lactation spaces
- If policies permit baby to nurse on site
- How to reserve and access lactation spaces. A shared calendar works well
- How to accommodate milk expression when in the field
- Time to discuss lactation accommodations with manager/supervisor -- ideally, before parental leave is taken
- That management and leadership support breastfeeding and milk expression at work


Scheduling breaks

Women need to either nurse their baby or pump milk at regular intervals to maintain milk supply.



When a woman returns to work, it usually means that she will not be pumping as often as she would be nursing if she were at home. To maintain milk supply, she will need to nurse baby more often at home.

A typical expression break involves walking from the work station to the lactation room, unpacking the pump and setting it up, expressing milk for 10 minutes, washing pump parts and repacking them, depositing milk in refrigerator, and walking back to workstation. Depending on the distance between the work station and the lactation room this should take about 20 minutes.

**Typical feeding schedule
for maternity leave**

7:00 am	
8:00 am	
9:00 am	
10:00 am	
11:00 am	
12:00 pm	
1:00 pm	
2:00 pm	
3:00 pm	
4:00 pm	
5:00 pm	
6:00 pm	

**Typical pumping schedule
for return to work**

7:00 am	
8:00 am	
9:00 am	
10:00 am	
11:00 am	
12:00 pm	
1:00 pm	
2:00 pm	
3:00 pm	
4:00 pm	
5:00 pm	
6:00 pm	

(Insert work place breastfeeding support policy here)

(Insert location and guidelines for use of lactation rooms here)

Creating a Culture of Support



Do:

- Know your organization's policies.
- Know where lactation spaces are located.
- Know who to ask for supervisor support. (*EDIT: Include your organization-specific information.*)
- Recognize that employees undergo stress when returning to work after welcoming a new child.
- Help employees balance work duties and personal needs with flexible breaks and schedules.
- Provide employees with supportive resources. (Describe where breastfeeding support handouts are stored.)
- Set aside a time to meet with your employee to discuss plans and demonstrate your support before her maternity leave.
- Ensure your department knows how to support clients, customers, vendors, patients and visitors who need privacy to breastfeed or express milk.
 - Inform your work team about parents' rights to breastfeed wherever they are.
 - If a parent requests privacy, direct the individual to an available lactation room or private space in your work area.

Do NOT:

- Ask an employee when they will be done.
- Treat an employee's needs like an inconvenience.
- Consider a restroom a suitable place to express milk.
- Insist pumping should be done only at certain times, or for a certain amount of time. Every individual varies.
- Ask private questions, such as "How many ounces do you collect?" or "What do you do in there?"
- Treat a breastfeeding employee as if they are ill.
- Tolerate disrespect toward the breastfeeding employee from other team members.

Remember:

- Support for breastfeeding employees brings many benefits: healthier babies, happier employees, cost-savings to organizations and compliance with state and federal requirements.
- It is important for supervisors to be familiar with organizational policies that support breastfeeding employees. (*EDIT: Include how to access your organization's information.*)
- Creating a culture of support includes respecting individual needs, offering flexibility and collaborating toward practical solutions.

Supervisor's Checklist:

- Identify lactation spaces.
- Discuss the organization's lactation policy for supporting breastfeeding employees prior to the employee's leave, if possible, so you can make needed arrangements beforehand.
- Praise! Express support for your employee's decision to breastfeed.
- Assure the employee that direct supervisors and other relevant managers are aware of needs.
- Review the employee's typical work/break schedule to arrange for milk expression breaks.
- Arrange for coverage while the employee is away from the work station.
- Seek feedback from the employee.