

Breastfeeding Friendly

Background Information/Rationale for Focus

In 2007, 68% of women with children under six years of age were employed, up from 34% in 1976.¹ The Canadian Pediatric Society, Health Canada, Dietitians of Canada and the World Health Organization recommend that women feed their babies only breast milk for the first six months of life. At six months, solid foods can be given in addition to breast milk, which can be offered up to two years and beyond.² This means that some women will continue to breastfeed after returning to work. A supportive work environment can make a big difference in having a successful breastfeeding experience that will benefit babies, mothers and employers!



Breastfeeding provides a number of benefits to mother and baby. It strengthens the bond between mother and child and meets a baby's nutritional and emotional needs well into the second year of life and beyond. Breastfed babies have stronger immune systems, which mean they have fewer infections, less frequent food allergies, and less severe illnesses, resulting in fewer hospitalizations than infants who receive breast milk substitutes.^{3,4} Exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months is linked to reduced obesity rates among children and there is evidence that breastfeeding may reduce the risk of diabetes and some forms of cancer.^{3,4,5} Women who breastfeed their infants have fewer post-partum complications and are less likely to develop certain types of ovarian and breast cancers.³

The ease and convenience of breastfeeding can continue when a mother decides to return to work and should be encouraged in the workplace.

Workplaces that have implemented programs to support breastfeeding employees have found:

- Reduced employee turnover;
- Lower absenteeism rates;
- Lower health care costs;
- Higher productivity and loyalty; and,
- Positive public relations.

Return on Investment

For every \$1.00 invested in a workplace lactation program, there is an estimated \$1.50 to \$4.50 return on investment.

Employers who establish breastfeeding policies and a workplace environment supportive of continued breastfeeding go beyond the requirements set out in the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on Discrimination because of Pregnancy and Breastfeeding*⁶ by demonstrating their commitment to the health and well-being of their employees and their families.

Goals for the Workplace to Strive For

1. To increase awareness of:
 - the benefits of breastfeeding
 - workplace guidelines for accommodating the needs of lactating mothers to express breast milk during working hours.
2. To provide resources and tools within the organization that will:
 - assist employees returning to work following maternity/parental leaves
 - assist managers/supervisors to accommodate the needs of lactating mothers.
3. To create a supportive environment that accommodates the needs of lactating mothers in the workplace.
4. To create a workplace policy or strategy that will encourage the support of mothers who choose to continue breastfeeding their children upon their return to work.

Getting Started

Workplace Wellness Team, Environmental Scan and Needs Assessment

- Create a workplace wellness team, which includes employees and management to gauge your workers needs and interests;
- Complete an environmental scan to determine how supportive the workplace is regarding healthy eating and physical activity;
- Conduct a needs assessment to determine what healthy living initiatives are important to employees; and,
- Based on the results of your environmental scan and needs assessment, consult with the workplace wellness team to decide which interventions fit with the requirements of your workplace.

Awareness Raising

- Utilize displays and bulletin boards to provide information about breastfeeding, offer tips for success, and highlight the importance of overall health and nutrition for nursing mothers;
- Designate an accessible area to display pamphlets and materials relating to breastfeeding principles, techniques and local support services;
- Provide a list of breastfeeding support resources available from the Public Health Resource Centre and local library; and,
- Include short articles in internal newsletters or paycheck inserts.

Skill Building

- Incorporate presentations/workshops based on employee interest through ‘Lunch ‘n Learn’ sessions discussing benefits of breastfeeding and post-natal health;
- Allow the Health & Safety/Wellness Coordinator and/or interested staff to attend training courses related to establishing a breastfeeding friendly workplace; and,
- Provide funding and allow time off work for employees to attend breastfeeding education opportunities.

Creating a Supportive Environment

- Allow part-time work or job sharing to enable a working mother to balance her need to nurture her baby with her need to work;
- Create a “mother’s room” or a private area which is clean, quiet and has enough space for a comfortable chair for breastfeeding or expressing breast milk and electricity for a breast-pump. A washroom is not an appropriate environment in which to breastfeed a baby or to express/pump milk;
- Provide access to a safe water source and a sink for washing hands and rinsing out any breast pump equipment;
- Offer flexible hours to allow for pumping and feeding;
- Offer an appropriate place to store breast milk. A refrigerator is a safe place to store breast milk; and,
- Provide ongoing employee education in order to create a positive work environment for women returning to work, and who would like to continue to breastfeed.

Healthy Workplace Policy Suggestions

- Create a breastfeeding supportive workplace policy;
- A sample workplace breastfeeding policy and toolkit is available by contacting Project Health;
- Identify a staff member to oversee the development and implementation of the workplace breastfeeding policy. This could be your Wellness Coordinator if you have one, or another staff member who is interested and supportive of this initiative; and,
- Establish flexible scheduling policies for breastfeeding/pumping/feeding.



Telephone consultation is available through **Project Health: 519-883-2287**

Region of Waterloo Public Health Resources

Project Health Resources: (call Project Health phone line @ 519-883-2287)

Pamphlets:

- Me? Breastfeed? (Peer-led prenatal breastfeeding workshop)
- Baby Friendly Initiative

Poster:

- Breastfeeding in the workplace
- Breastfeeding Anytime, Anywhere

Other Services:

- Creating a Mother Friendly Workplace Strategy Toolkit
- Phone consultation for breastfeeding policy development

Public Health Resource Centre:

To borrow teaching kits/books/video resources please call: 519-883-2256

To order pamphlets: email phrc@region.waterloo.on.ca or call the automated order line at: 519-883-2374 or order online at www.region.waterloo.on.ca/ph -- Resources/

Resource Centre/Pamphlets

Pamphlets/Fact Sheets:

- Breastfeeding Buddies (limit 25)
- Breastfeeding your baby (limit 25)
- Breastfeeding...what to expect and who to call
- Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program

Books:

For Employers:

- Breastfeeding Best Practice Guidelines for Nurses (RNAO, Sept 2003)
- National breastfeeding guidelines for health care providers (Watters, N.E., 1996)
- A practical workbook to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in community based programs (Government Services Canada, 2002)

For Employees:

- Nursing mother, working mother: the essential guide for breastfeeding and staying close to your baby after you return to work (Pryor, G., 1997)
- Learning to breastfeed your baby (Hamilton Regional Lactation Committee, 2004)

Complete guide to everyday risks in pregnancy and breastfeeding (Koren, G.)
The Breastfeeding book (Sears, M., 2000)
Breastfeeding and the active woman (Pfluke, L.A., 1995)
The Breastfeeding answer book (Mohrbacher, N., 2002)
Bestfeeding: how to breastfeed your baby (Renfrew, M., 2004)
Breastfeeding: fundamental concepts (Dougherty, M., 2006)
Breastfeeding 2001 (Saunders, W.B., 2001)
Breastfeeding and human lactation (Jones and Bartlett, 1998)
The Breastfeeding atlas (Wilson-Clay, B.)
Breastfeeding the adopted baby (Peterson, D.S., 1994)
Why breastfeed: applying the reasons model to breastfeeding decisions (Rempel, L., 1999)

Videos:

14 steps to better breastfeeding (2000) also available on DVD
Breastfeeding and basketball (1999)

Kits:

Breastfeeding kit
Creating a mother friendly workplace strategy

Posters:

Breastfeeding protects mother from breast cancer, and baby from....
A Mother's touch
Who said a day at the mall was impossible?

Displays:

Breastfeeding in the workplace
Breastfeeding Anytime, Anywhere

Information and Community Resources

Healthy Children Info Line519-883-2245
Telehealth Ontario1-866-797-0000
Motherisk1-416-813-6780
Community Information Centre of Waterloo Region519-579-3800

Breastfeeding Support

Breastfeeding Friendly

Breastfeeding Buddies Peer Support	519-772-1016
La Leche League Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge.....	1-800-665-4324
Grand River Hospital New Mothers Support Services	519-749-4300 Ext. 2263
Me? Breastfeed? Prenatal Breastfeeding Workshop	519-772-1016
Cambridge Family Early Years Centre	519-740-8353
Our Place Family Resource and Early Years Centre.....	519-571-1626
Ontario Early Years Centre Kitchener-Waterloo.....	519-741-8585
Wilmot Family Resource Centre.....	519-622-2731
Baby Friendly Information Line	519-883-2002 Ext.6151
Breast pump rental:	
Health Care Centre Pharmacy 835 King St. W., Kitchener	519-749-4227
Preston Medical Pharmacy 125 Waterloo St. S., Cambridge	519-653-1994

Community Infant Feeding Rooms

Kitchener

Fairview Park Mall (Sears Infant Wear Department)
Fairview Park Mall (Food Court area)
Kitchener City Hall
Kitchener Downtown Farmer's Market
Our Place Family Resource and Early Years Centre

Waterloo

Region of Waterloo Public Health-Waterloo
Waterloo OEYC-YMCA of Kitchener-Waterloo
Conestoga Mall (separate area off Family Washroom)

Cambridge

Region of Waterloo Public Health-Cambridge
Cambridge Centre Mall (Sears 2-6X Children's Wear Department)
Cambridge Centre Mall (by Guest Services)
Cambridge Family Early Years Centre

Internet Resources

www.projecthealth.ca

Breastfeeding Friendly

Newman Breastfeeding Clinic and Institute (Dr. Jack Newman)

<http://www.nbc.ca>

La Lèche League International

<http://www.llli.org/>

Region of Waterloo Public Health

<http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/breastfeeding>

Best Start. *How to be a Family-Friendly Workplace*. Health Nexus, Ontario.

Booklet for workplaces about becoming more family friendly. Includes information about pregnancy, breastfeeding, and transition to parenting as well as examples of family friendly strategies.

http://www.beststart.org/resources/wrkplc_health/pdf/preg_work_16pg_FNL.pdf

California Department of Public Health. *WIC Breastfeeding Resources for Employers*.

Resources available to download include:

- Sample Paycheque Messages
- Sample Flyer for Employee Break Rooms
- Improving the Bottom Line for Businesses
- Developing a Breastfeeding Workplace Policy

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WICBFEmployerResources.aspx>

Department of Labour. *Breastfeeding in the Workplace: A Guide for Employers*. New Zealand

Includes suggestions for both large and small businesses as well as an overview of why it makes good business sense to support breastfeeding in the workplace.

<http://www.ers.dol.govt.nz/publications/breastfeeding/index.html>

LA Best Babies Network. *Pregnancy and Family Friendly Workplace Policies*.

This document provides recommendations and useful websites to assist in creating a workplace culture that supports women and their families.

http://www.labestbabies.org/pdf/LABBN_Policy_Brief_030607.pdf

Maine General Medical Center. *Mother-Friendly Worksite Toolkit*. Waterville Maine.

Breastfeeding Friendly

This toolkit includes information about what is needed to set up a worksite breastfeeding support program as well as some sample resources. This link takes you to the short version of their Mother-Friendly Worksite Toolkit. The full toolkit available to order, information how to do so contained in the short version.

<http://www.maine-general.org/workfiles/motherfriendlyworksit toolkit.pdf>

Middlesex-London Health Unit. *Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace*.

This resource includes an overview of the benefits of breastfeeding for employers, mothers, children and the community-at-large. Also includes information for employees and a number of links to helpful breastfeeding resources.

<http://www.healthunit.com/articlesPDF/12788.pdf>

Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2008). *Policy on Discrimination Because of Pregnancy and Breastfeeding*.

This document contains the Ontario Human Rights Commission's interpretation of the provisions of the Ontario *Human Rights Code* relating to pregnancy and breastfeeding. The Policy examines the different ways in which women experience discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and breastfeeding. The Policy also sets out the respective responsibilities of those involved in the accommodation process.

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/Policies/PolicyPregBreastfeedEN/pdf>

Ontario Public Health Association. (2008). *Creating a Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace*.

This Canadian publication will assist your organization in creating a family-friendly workplace that will enable employees to achieve a balance between their career and parenting responsibilities. Provides an overview of components of a workplace breastfeeding support program.

<http://www.opha.on.ca/resources/docs/BreastfeedingFriendlyWorkplace-Sep08.pdf>

Texas Department of State Health Services.

Resources that pertain to combining breastfeeding and work that are available to download include:

- *Talking with Your Employer About Breastfeeding* (for employees)
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/bf/pdf/13-06-12257.pdf>
- *Breastfeeding and Returning to Work* (for employees)
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/bf/pdf/13-06-11496.pdf>
- *Become a Mother-Friendly Worksite* (for employers)
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/bf/pdf/13-58.pdf>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Business Case for Breastfeeding: Steps for Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite.*

A series of resources available to order that address why supporting breastfeeding in the workplace is important to how to establish a workplace breastfeeding support program.

- [Kit](#) (Item #MCH00254);
- [Resource for Business Managers](#) (Item #MCH00249);
- [Resource for Employees](#) (Item #MCH00250))

<http://ask.hrsa.gov/detail.cfm?PubID=MCH00254>

References

- ¹ Human Resources and Social Development Canada. (2008) . *Indicators of well-being in Canada: Work – employment rate.* Retrieved August 27, 2008 from: www4.hrsdc.gc.ca.
- ² Health Canada. (2004). *Exclusive breastfeeding duration: 2004 Health Canada recommendation.* Catalogue No. H44-73/2004E-HTML.
- ³ Ip S, Chung M, Raman G, Chew P, Magula N, DeVine D, Trikalinos T, & Lau J. (2007). *Breastfeeding and maternal and infant health outcomes in developed countries* (Report No. 153. 4-20-2007). Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.
- ⁴ Horta BL, Bahl R, Martines JC, & Victoria CG. (2007). *Evidence on the long-term effects of breastfeeding: Systematic reviews and meta-analyses.* Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization.
- ⁵ Flynn MA, McNeil DA, Maloff B, Mutasingwa D, Wu M, Ford C, & Tough SC. (2006). Reducing obesity and related chronic disease risk in children and youth: A synthesis of evidence with 'best practice' recommendations. *Obesity Reviews*, 7 (s1), 7-66.
- ⁶ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2008). *Policy on discrimination because of pregnancy and breastfeeding.* Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

