

# CREATING A MOTHER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE STRATEGY



## EMPLOYER MANUAL



**project health.ca**  
Supporting Healthy Workplaces

*This manual is designed to help you develop a strategy to support breastfeeding mothers in your workplace.*

For more information or consultation, please call:

519-883-2287

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## A BUSINESS CASE FOR PROMOTING BREASTFEEDING IN YOUR WORKPLACE

Over the last few decades, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of women in the workforce with young children. In 2006, 64 per cent of women with children under the age of three were employed, more than double the percentage in 1976 when only 28 per cent of these women were working outside the home.<sup>1</sup>

Breastfeeding is well recognized as a means to protect, promote and support the health of infants and young children. Human breast milk promotes optimal growth and development of a baby's brain, immune system, and general physiology. Research has shown breast milk to be an important factor in decreasing the risk for common illnesses, especially diarrhea and infections of the respiratory tract, ear and urinary tract. Evidence also suggests breastfeeding may decrease the risk of obesity, diabetes and two types of childhood leukemia.<sup>2</sup>

Breastfeeding also has definite health benefits for mothers. Evidence shows that breastfeeding reduces women's risk for breast and ovarian cancer, and may decrease the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis later in life.

It is these benefits that have led the World Health Organization and Health Canada to recommend that infants be breastfed exclusively to six months of age with continued breastfeeding to 24 months and beyond.<sup>3</sup> As a result, more mothers are returning to work after paid maternity leave wanting to combine employment and breastfeeding. In order to be successful, these women need workplaces that are supportive of their needs.

You, as an employer, will benefit because healthy mothers and children have benefits for your business. These benefits include:

- **Lower absenteeism** – One-day absences to care for sick children have been shown to occur more than twice as often for mothers of formula-fed infants.<sup>4</sup>
- **Lower health care costs to extended health plans** – One study found that for every 1,000 babies not breastfed, there were 2,033 extra physician visits, 212 extra hospitalization days, and 609 extra prescriptions for three illnesses alone (ear, respiratory and gastrointestinal infections).<sup>5</sup>
- **Higher productivity and loyalty** – Studies comparing employees' satisfaction with their work have shown that those employed in organizations that are supportive of breastfeeding have higher morale and better satisfaction.<sup>6</sup>
- **Improved public relations** – By providing a program to support breastfeeding employees, your ability to recruit top-notch staff will be enhanced.<sup>7</sup>

As well, as outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Commission's "*Policy on Discrimination Because of Pregnancy and Breastfeeding*", an employer has an obligation to accommodate the needs of breastfeeding employees.

<sup>1</sup> Almey M. (2007) Women in Canada: Work Chapter Updates. Statistics Canada. Available at [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)

<sup>2</sup> 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. Prepared for: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>3</sup> Health Canada (2004). Exclusive Breastfeeding Duration: 2004 Health Canada Recommendation. (Available at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca). Last accessed May 2009)

<sup>4</sup> Cohen, R, Mrtek, MB, \* Mrtek, RB (1995). Comparison of maternal absenteeism and infant illness rates among breastfeeding and formula-feeding women in two corporations. American Journal of Health Promotion, 10(2), 148-153.

<sup>5</sup> Ball T & Wright A. (1999). Health care costs of formula-feeding in the first year of life. Pediatrics, 103(4), 871-876.

<sup>6</sup> Galtry J. (1997). Lactation & the labor market: breastfeeding, labor market changes, & public policy in the United States. Health Care Women Int., 18, 467-480.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2008). The Business Case for Breastfeeding.

# THE FOUR PILLARS OF A MOTHER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

## Privacy



Employees who would like to express breast milk need a designated location to comfortably and safely express milk during the workday. The amount of space required is minimal and the room should be centrally located.

### *Basic Features:*

- Private room or area with door that locks
- Clean and well ventilated
- Comfortable chair
- Table
- Access to hot and cold running water and soap
- Electrical outlet
- Adequate lighting
- Wastebasket

### *Optimal Features:*

- Electric breast pump/storage area for breast pumps
- Refrigerator (or nearby access) for storage of breast milk
- Information on support services
- Lending library of informative books on working and breastfeeding
- Bulletin board
- Access to a breastfeeding expert



### *Other considerations:*

- Sign-up sheet for room scheduling purposes
- Usually first-come, first-served basis
- Disinfecting solution for cleanup of spills
- Employees take ownership for care and cleaning of the room
- Does room need to be locked when not in use?

## Flexibility

A work assignment should be flexible to allow for a mother to express her milk 2-3 times throughout the work day (approx. 15-20 minutes each time).

### *Basic Features:*

- Use of existing break and meal times

### *Optimal Features:*

- Lactation breaks over and above existing break and meal times without needing to make up this extra time

### *Other Considerations:*

- On site or “close-by” child care where a mother can go to feed her child directly
- Child care provider brings the child to the workplace to be fed directly
- Ability to work from home
- Ability to “ease-back” into full-time
- Ability to temporarily work part-time



## **Education**

Education about breastfeeding that begins prior to pregnancy or during pregnancy is important for all employees so informed choices can be made and co-workers can provide support for breastfeeding mothers in the workplace.

### *Basic Features:*

- Pregnancy and breastfeeding pamphlets, books, videos available for employees
- List of external breastfeeding supports available to employees

### *Optimal Features:*

- Benefits of breastfeeding promoted to all employees
- Prenatal package of information distributed to all expectant employees
- Onsite breastfeeding classes for all expectant employees
- Lactation support contracted from external source
- Specific resources about balancing requirements of breastfeeding with job responsibilities

## **Support**

Support from a variety of sources is a key determinant to success for a mother wishing to continue breastfeeding upon returning to work. Key sources of support for breastfeeding employees include family, friends, co-workers, managers/supervisors and senior management.

### *Basic Features:*

- Manager/supervisor training includes information on accommodating the needs of breastfeeding employees
- List of community breastfeeding supports available (e.g. La Leche League, Breastfeeding Buddies)
- Communication of how the workplace supports breastfeeding mothers

### *Optimal Features:*

- Formal written policy
- Internal mother-to-mother support group
- Involve employees (mothers, co-workers, etc.) in all phases of setting up a lactation support program
- Electronic options for breastfeeding employees to connect with each other
- Designated breastfeeding resource person

## BREASTFEEDING ROOM EXAMPLES



This existing first-aid room can serve a dual purpose and be made available to breastfeeding mothers.



Its **basic features** include:

- Private room
- Door that locks
- Clean
- Comfortable chair
- Counter
- Sink with hot and cold running water
- Electrical outlet
- Adequate lighting
- Wastebasket
- Bulletin board for posting information



This room is solely used by breastfeeding mothers.



Its **basic features** include:

- Private room
- Door that locks
- Clean
- Comfortable seating
- Table and counter
- Sink with hot and cold running water
- Adequate lighting
- Electrical outlet

This room's **enhanced features** include:

- Electric breast pump
- Storage for personal breast pumps
- Refrigerator
- Area for educational materials (e.g. videos, books, brochures)
- CD player for soft music

**Enhanced  
Breastfeeding Room**

# WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

## Assess the Need for a Program



Gather information and review it to learn what can be done at your workplace to support mothers who are breastfeeding. You can do this by conducting focus groups with employees, delivering surveys, or reviewing information that already exists at your workplace.

Before looking at what is needed you will want to define the goals you are hoping to achieve with your program, and identify who should be involved and who would benefit from such support. Some sample goals include:

- Prepare employees to return to work after the birth of their child
- Increase and maintain high levels of productivity
- Increase employee morale
- Reduce absenteeism
- Reduce staff turnover
- Support families with young children

What is it that you want to find out? Some ideas to consider:

- What services are currently available?
- How well do current services meet employees' needs?
- Do different job functions have different access to, or needs for, services?
- Is there a breastfeeding or lactation support policy in place? If there is an existing policy, does it need to be improved?
- How does the physical environment support breastfeeding mothers? Are there barriers in the physical environment that would make support for breastfeeding mothers a challenge?
- How do employees perceive your organization's support for breastfeeding mothers?
- How do managers and supervisors perceive your organization's support for breastfeeding mothers?
- How do other stakeholders perceive your organization's support for breastfeeding mothers?
- How will you measure success? Is there baseline information that you need to collect now?

## Gather Employee Input

There are a number of ways to gather employee input about breastfeeding support at your workplace. Start with reviewing the demographics of your organization. Do you have a lot of women in their reproductive years (18 to 44 years of age)? Do you have access to information that will let you know if any of the mothers in your organization are breastfeeding? Check with human resources to see if they have had any feedback or requests from employees on the issue. Surveys or focus groups might produce information about what employees would (and would not) like to see for support. Other ways to gather employee input include:

- Workplace sponsored parents group or e-mail listserv
- Workplace sponsored health fair

## Develop a Mother-Friendly Policy

Some of the elements of support for breastfeeding mothers, such as education and provision of lactation rooms, can be set up without a formal policy. However, without a policy, these activities may only last as long as the original participants are involved. A formal policy establishes the program and defines program features for managers and employees.

Work with people within your organization who are responsible for human resources policies. The policy should be tailored to the needs of the organization and its employees. In developing the policy you should consider the following:

- **Rationale:** state why providing support to breastfeeding mothers is important to the organization and its employees
- **Scope of Support:** describe how the support will be provided
- **Criteria for Participation:** define who is eligible to participate in the program, what is required to participate and how to participate (flex time or paid time)
- **Responsibilities:** outline which area of the organization is responsible for managing the support, the type of support expected from supervisors and the responsibilities of participating employees

Developed and designed by MaineGeneral Medical Center, Augusta and Waterville, Maine.



## IDEAS FOR SMALLER BUSINESSES

Small businesses can face additional challenges when considering initiatives to support breastfeeding, particularly those businesses with limited space.

Here are some suggestions that might work for you:

- If you cannot provide the space, can you provide the time?
  - Flexible working hours
  - Reduced hours
  - Longer lunch hours
  - Working from home
- Make one or more offices available at intervals during the day.
  - Blinds may need to be installed for privacy
  - You can add a comfortable chair
- Multiple businesses within a single building could pool resources to lease and equip a lactation room for staff.
- If a room is not available, look at the space you do have and see if things could be reorganized or stored off site to allow you to create a space.
- Do you have a sick room that can be adapted?
- Use screens and “Do not disturb” notices to make a cubicle more private.
- Contact a lactation consultant or breastfeeding advocate to assist you in finding an appropriate space.



Department of Labour Breastfeeding in the Workplace: a Guide for employers [www.dol.govt.nz](http://www.dol.govt.nz)

## PROMOTING YOUR PROGRAM

Once you have implemented your program, it is important to promote it to both potential users and to all employees, managers and supervisors. The goal of your promotional activities is to increase support for the program, encourage breastfeeding employees to use the space(s) that have been made available, and to boost the company's image in the community. This promotion will underscore for everyone that your company is supportive of breastfeeding employees.

A word of caution – take steps to ensure that any promotion does not alienate or create negative feelings on the part of those parents who have chosen to formula-feed.

### Strategies for Promotion

- Employee health fairs
- Staff meetings
- Open-house or “ribbon-cutting” for the lactation room to celebrate the launch of the program
- Articles in your employee newsletter (print or electronic)
- Pay cheque inserts
- Packages of information for pregnant employees and employees whose partners are pregnant
- “Lunch and Learn” sessions with a lactation consultant
- Posters, displays, bulletin board announcements
- Employee benefit packages
- New employee orientation
- Return to work packages for employees prior to returning from maternity leave

## EVALUATING YOUR PROGRAM

By collecting a relatively small amount of information, you will be able to assess your “Return on Investment”. This information can be used to enhance the program through additional resources and support from employees.

### Tools for Evaluating your Return on Investment

#### Usage Logs

Keep a log in the lactation room for users to document the hours the room was used and to communicate any needs or suggestions.

#### Satisfaction Survey of Breastfeeding Employees

Typical questions will focus on whether the employee feels their needs are being met and if any improvement or enhancements to the program can make it better.

#### Satisfaction Survey of Co-Workers, Managers and Supervisors

This type of survey allows you to measure support for the program and alerts you to any issues or concerns that may need to be addressed.

#### Exit Survey

This survey would be geared toward mothers who have benefited from the service and will no longer be using it. You can collect information on how valuable the program was and ways to improve it.

#### Other Helpful Data

Collecting and analyzing data on rates of absenteeism, staff turnover, extended health benefit claims and breastfeeding duration can provide valuable information about whether or not the program’s goals are being met. Comparing data from before and after implementation will provide you with a quantification of effectiveness of the program on your business. Depending on the size of your workplace, you may be able to segment your data into different sites/work locations, departments, etc.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What will it cost?**

The cost of a mother-friendly program will vary between companies. Factors that affect cost will depend on type of building, if there are multiple worksites, number of employees, number of maternity leaves, etc. The resources that you decide to invest in (e.g. comfortable chair, breast pump rental or subsidy, etc.) will influence the cost. However, you need to examine the benefits of such a program (see page 5 for a discussion of the benefits) against any of the costs.

### **Does it have to be a permanent space?**

Depending on your worksite (e.g. small size), a permanent lactation room may not be realistic. If your organization has a low number of maternity leaves, a private space may not be needed on a permanent basis. Every worksite is unique.

### **Are there any issues we should be aware of related to employees from different ethno-cultural groups?**

Women from all cultural backgrounds want dignity, respect and consideration. Communication is important to ensure cultural needs are addressed in a respectful manner.

### **How will other employees benefit?**

A work environment that accommodates the needs of breastfeeding mothers will have more satisfied and productive workers. With decreased absenteeism to care for sick children, other employees would be asked less often to cover for a breastfeeding mother. Overall morale within the workplace would be improved.

### **Why does an employee need to pump her breast milk during the workday?**

A breastfeeding mother continues to produce breast milk while she is at work. Being able to express or pump her breast milk allows her to be more physically comfortable during the day and save the expressed breast milk so it can be given to her child when they are not together.

### **Are there any concerns about employees storing breast milk in the company's refrigerator?**

There are no public health concerns about storing expressed breast milk in a company refrigerator. Mothers should be encouraged to label expressed breast milk with their name and date the milk was expressed. Refrigerators should be kept at a temperature of 4° C. It may be helpful to hang a thermometer in the refrigerator. Alternatively, mothers can choose to store their expressed breast milk in a cooler bag with ice packs until the end of the day when they would take it home.



# RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS



# MOTHER-FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT FORM

Human Resources	
Number of employed women of childbearing age (16 – 44)	
Percent of female employees employed full-time	
Number of male employees ages 16 – 44	
Number of pregnancies among employees annually	
Breastfeeding rates of employees (if known)	
Current turnover rate among women who take maternity leave	
Current rates of absenteeism among new mothers and fathers	
Current Policies	
What existing policies provide support services for breastfeeding employees?	
What policies allow for a gradual return to work following maternity leave?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time employment <input type="checkbox"/> Job-sharing <input type="checkbox"/> Telecommuting <input type="checkbox"/> Flex-time <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> Do not have any such policies currently	
What break policies could be adapted to allow for milk expression breaks?	
What new policies would need to be developed to provide for lactation support?	
Program Components	
What department could likely serve as the administrative home for the lactation support program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Wellness division <input type="checkbox"/> Employee health <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
What funding is available to support a lactation support program?	

Program Components (continued)	
What realistic options do women currently have for expressing milk during the work period in privacy (other than a bathroom)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal office <input type="checkbox"/> Office of another employee <input type="checkbox"/> Designated lactation room <input type="checkbox"/> Other space:
If no designated lactation room exists, what options might be available for a space with an electrical outlet that can be locked?	<input type="checkbox"/> Unused office space <input type="checkbox"/> Closet or other small space <input type="checkbox"/> A room created within another space <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
What type of breast pump equipment do breastfeeding employees currently receive?	<input type="checkbox"/> None (employees use their own breast pump equipment) <input type="checkbox"/> Company purchases hospital-grade electric breast pumps <input type="checkbox"/> Company rents hospital-grade electric breast pumps <input type="checkbox"/> Company provides/subsidizes portable personal use pumps
Where do employees currently store breast milk that they express during the work hours?	<input type="checkbox"/> Employee provided cooler pack <input type="checkbox"/> Company provided cooler pack <input type="checkbox"/> Small refrigerator designated for storage of breast milk <input type="checkbox"/> Public shared refrigerator <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No mothers are currently breastfeeding
What educational materials are currently available for pregnant and breastfeeding employees?	<input type="checkbox"/> Prenatal/postpartum classes <input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets <input type="checkbox"/> Books <input type="checkbox"/> Videos <input type="checkbox"/> Company web site <input type="checkbox"/> Information about community resources <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> None
What community resources are available to assist in developing a lactation support program and/or to provide direct services to breastfeeding employees?	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital or private clinic nurses <input type="checkbox"/> Lactation consultants at the hospital or in private practice <input type="checkbox"/> La Leche League group <input type="checkbox"/> Local breastfeeding coalition <input type="checkbox"/> Other groups: <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
What in-house promotion options are available?	<input type="checkbox"/> Company newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Memos/emails <input type="checkbox"/> Company web site <input type="checkbox"/> Employee health fair <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> None

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## ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SUPPORT OF BREASTFEEDING IN THE WORKPLACE

Listed below are several components of breastfeeding support in the workplace. These are offered as a guide to employers and employees who are considering ways to support mothers who continue to breastfeed their children.

### SPACE:

#### Room:

- Dedicated, private room to express or pump breast milk
- Floating/multipurpose room (space available)
- Other: (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

#### Location:

- Within a 5 minute walk of employee work areas
- Within a 10 minute walk of employee work areas
- In another building
- Other: (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

#### Furnishings:

- Chair
- Table
- Sink
- Dedicated refrigerator
- Use of refrigerator space
- Sink with running water (hot and cold)
- Access to running water (hot and cold)
- Breast pumps
  - Multi-user pump provided on site
  - Employer provides pump rental
  - Employer subsidizes pump rental
  - Employer subsidizes pump purchase
  - Employee provides own pump
- Breast pump personal supplies
  - Provided by employer
  - Subsidized by employer
  - Purchased by employee
- Other: (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

## **FLEXIBILITY:**

### **Work Schedule:**

- Part-time work
- Job sharing
- Flex time
- Compressed work week

### **Other accommodations for mothers who breastfeed:**

- Caregiver brings child to mother for feedings
- On-site child care with accommodation for breastfeeding
- Contract with nearby child care centre that accommodates mothers who breastfeed

### **Lactation breaks:**

- Two breaks and a lunch period in an 8 hour workday
- Paid breaks for pumping (breaks are not deducted from work time)
- Expanded unpaid breaks

## **SUPPORT:**

- Written workplace policy
- Breastfeeding classes for pregnant employees and their partners
- Return to work consultation
- Access to a skilled lactation care provider on an as-needed basis
- Breastfeeding discussion group forums (face to face or electronically)
- Include protection for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, in company sexual harassment policy and training
- Information for supervisors and managers about the basic needs of employees who are breastfeeding

## EDUCATION:

- Prenatally, information can be distributed through:
  - Information packages that include information about the support for breastfeeding they can expect in the workplace
  - Lunch and learn sessions
  - Wellness coordinators
  - Pamphlets, books, videos, web pages on the business portal
- Return to work:
  - Information packages
  - Back to work education
  - Ongoing education
  - One to one assistance
- Provide a list of community resources to employees
- Offer basic education on breastfeeding to make an informed decision about infant feeding to employees (and their partners)
- Provide inservice/training to all employees, supervisors, on the mother friendly policy

Developed and designed by MaineGeneral Medical Center, Augusta and Waterville, Maine.



## SAMPLE POLICY

Every workplace will have their own format for policies and procedures. The sample policy provided here is a basic policy and is meant to illustrate key information that should be included in a workplace breastfeeding policy regardless of format. This sample policy can be adapted by workplaces to be consistent with their individual strategies.

**Date:****Rationale:**

(Name of Company) recognizes the importance and health advantages of breastfeeding for infants and mothers.

**Scope of Support:**

(Name of Company) will provide a supportive environment that enables breastfeeding employees to express their breast milk during work hours.

*Privacy*

- An appropriate and private room, with access to hot and cold running water and soap, will be made available for the purpose of expressing breast milk.

*Flexibility*

- Breastfeeding employees will be allowed a flexible schedule for the expression of breast milk.
- Access to a refrigerator for storage of expressed breast milk will be provided.

*Education*

- All employees will be informed of this policy.
- Information promoting breastfeeding will be made available to all pregnant and breastfeeding employees.

*Support*

- Breastfeeding employees will be provided with a list of community resources to support them in transitioning back to work following maternity leave.

**Criteria for Participation**

Employees returning from maternity/parental leave who wish to maintain breastfeeding while at work are eligible to participate in the breastfeeding support program for as long as they choose to breastfeed.

**Responsibilities**

Employees will provide a minimum of two weeks notice of the desire to continue breastfeeding upon return to work.

Managers/supervisors are required to respond to requests from employees in a timely manner and assess the worksite and the employee's job responsibilities to identify how the request will be accommodated.



## SAMPLE PAYCHEQUE MESSAGES

Adding one of the messages below to paycheque stubs is an easy way to let employees know that you accommodate breastfeeding employees.

- “If you are working and breastfeeding your child, we provide a private space and adequate time for expressing breast milk at work. Please see your supervisor for more information.”
- “We accommodate the needs of breastfeeding employees!”
- “If you are pregnant and plan to breastfeed your child, talk to your supervisor about how we can help you to continue breastfeeding after returning to work.”
- “We support employees who choose to breastfeed their children after returning to work by providing a private space and adequate time to express breast milk at work.”

*Adapted from the California WIC Program.*



## SAMPLE LETTER TO EMPLOYEE

Dear

(Name of Company) looks forward to your return to work. We would like to take this opportunity to provide you with information to help prepare you for your return.

Employees and their families play an important role in (Name of Company) culture and success. (Name of Company) is dedicated to fostering healthy babies and families, and is proud to offer parents additional support through our Mother-Friendly Workplace Program.

Research shows that going back to work is one of the biggest barriers to continuing breastfeeding. We hope to make this transition easier for you. Leading medical and health organizations report that breastfeeding is the best form of infant nutrition. The World Health Organization and Health Canada encourages mothers to breastfeed their children until 24 months and beyond.

The four pillars of a Mother-Friendly Workplace program are:

1. Flexibility: Your manager has been contacted about allowing you flexible time to express milk. As you know, the number of times and the length of time a mother needs to express breast milk will vary depending on your child's age and nutritional needs. If you have any problems, please contact \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Privacy: We will work to locate an appropriate and private space for you to express breast milk upon your return to work. The space will have a chair and table as well as an electric outlet should you be using a pump. A sink is located \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Support: Please feel free to contact \_\_\_\_\_ at any time with questions, comments, or concerns.
4. Education: \_\_\_\_\_ can provide information on local breastfeeding support groups as well as contact information for local lactation consultants.

(Name of Company) is excited about providing you with a program that will help make the transition back to work as smooth as possible. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call \_\_\_\_\_.

Best wishes,

Developed and designed by MaineGeneral Medical Center, Augusta and Waterville, Maine



# Lactation Support Feedback Form

*For Breastfeeding Employees upon Completing the Lactation Support Program*

## Thank you for participating in our Company Lactation Support Program!

Congratulations for continuing to breastfeed after your return to work! Please take a few moments to complete this lactation support feedback form to provide us with your suggestions for ways we can continue to improve services to breastfeeding employees. We urge you to continue to spread the news about the program to your pregnant and breastfeeding colleagues as well.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

How old was your child when you returned to work? \_\_\_\_\_

How long did you express milk at work for your child? \_\_\_\_\_

How long did you breastfeed or provide your milk for your child? \_\_\_\_\_

How valuable were lactation program services in helping you meet your needs? On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being "Extremely Valuable" and 1 being "Did not Participate", please rate the program services listed below.

<b>Milk Expression Room</b>	<b>Extremely Valuable 5</b>	<b>Valuable 4</b>	<b>Somewhat Helpful 3</b>	<b>Not Helpful 2</b>	<b>Did not Participate 1</b>
Company designated lactation room					
Private office					
Other location: (please indicate)					
Breastfed baby at work					
<b>Milk Storage</b>	<b>Extremely Valuable 5</b>	<b>Valuable 4</b>	<b>Somewhat Helpful 3</b>	<b>Not Helpful 2</b>	<b>Did not Participate 1</b>
Company designated refrigerator					
Public shared refrigerator					
Personal cooler					
<b>Breast Pump Equipment</b>	<b>Extremely Valuable 5</b>	<b>Valuable 4</b>	<b>Somewhat Helpful 3</b>	<b>Not Helpful 2</b>	<b>Did not Participate 1</b>
Company provided/subsidized breast pump					
Personal breast pump					

Education	Extremely Valuable 5	Valuable 4	Somewhat Helpful 3	Not Helpful 2	Did not Participate 1
Prenatal breastfeeding class taught at work					
Pamphlets and videos provided by company					
“Back to work” class before or after returning to work					
Access to company provided lactation consultant or health professional for personal lactation assistance					
Classes in the community					
Support	Extremely Valuable 5	Valuable 4	Somewhat Helpful 3	Not Helpful 2	Did not Participate 1
Support from supervisor					
Support from co-workers					
Mother to mother support group					
<p>Which lactation support services did you find most helpful?</p> <p>What workplace challenges made it difficult to reach your feeding goals for your child?</p> <p>What recommendations do you feel the company should consider to further improve the program?</p> <p>If you marked “Did not Participate” for any of the answers above, please indicate your reason for not participating:</p> <p>Other comments:</p>					

**Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your feedback. Please return your completed form to:**

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# Lactation Support Program Feedback Form

*For Supervisors and Colleagues of Breastfeeding Employees*

As you know, the company provides a lactation support program to assist breastfeeding employees with providing breast milk for their children. We value your feedback on ways the program can continue to improve in order to meet the needs of all employees.

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

How many colleagues or employees under your supervision are you aware of who are currently utilizing the company lactation support program? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you attended an employee orientation or training event on the program?

- Yes
- No

How do you feel the following lactation program components have impacted the breastfeeding employees?

Program Components	Positive Impact	No Impact Observed	Negative Impact
Availability of a lactation room for milk expression			
Flexible breaks to express milk			
Flexible return to work policy (e.g. part-time, job sharing, telecommuting, flex-time, etc.)			
Workplace education opportunities such as prenatal classes and monthly support groups			
Opportunity to breastfeed baby at work			
Other:			

How do you feel these same components impact the operation of your department?

Program Components	Positive Impact	No Impact Observed	Negative Impact
Availability of a lactation room for milk expression			
Flexible breaks to express milk			
Flexible return to work policy (e.g. part-time, job sharing, telecommuting, flex-time, etc.)			
Workplace education opportunities such as prenatal classes and monthly support groups			
Opportunity to breastfeed baby at work			
Other:			

### Additional Feedback

Please describe what you feel works BEST about the company's lactation support program:

Please describe what may NOT be working well about the company's lactation support program:

What suggestions or ideas do you feel would help improve the program?

Other comments:

**Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your feedback. Please return your completed form to:**

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## TIPS FOR MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS

- Ensure you are aware of the provisions in the Ontario Human Rights Code related to the accommodation of breastfeeding mothers in the workplace
- Ensure all employees are aware of how the workplace supports breastfeeding mothers and any applicable policies
- Ensure pregnant employees are aware of how the workplace supports breastfeeding mothers including any applicable policies prior to start of the maternity leave
- Receive requests for breastfeeding accommodation from employees prior to return from maternity leave and
  - Respond to the request in a timely manner
  - Examine the worksite to identify how the request can be accommodated
  - Consult with Human Resources staff/Return to Work Coordinator to discuss alternatives or other solutions if it is difficult to identify an appropriate space
- Meet with employees returning from maternity leave to
  - Establish a work schedule and assignment that facilitates their breastfeeding needs
  - Identify an appropriate location for expression of breast milk within the worksite
- Refer employees to community resources as needed





# INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES



## BREASTFEEDING AND RETURNING TO WORK CHECKLIST

Two to four weeks before returning to work:	Done	Working on it	Need to do	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell your family that you want to continue breastfeeding after returning to work</li> <li>• Ask them for their support</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider taking extra time off:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange to take as much maternity leave as possible</li> <li>• Consider asking your employer to hold your position while you take a week or two of unpaid leave</li> <li>• Consider asking your employer if you can come back to work part-time at first</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule an appointment with your employer/supervisor to discuss returning to work</li> <li>• Take mother-friendly workplace materials with you</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss your plans with your employer/supervisor</li> <li>• Assure him/her that you will be able to maintain your daily and weekly work schedule</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your employer about the use of private space and temporarily arranging your schedule in order for you to pump or express breast milk at work</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up your return to work date to start on a Thursday or Friday</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find a child care provider close to your work or one who is supportive of breastfeeding mothers</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think about how much time you will need each work day to wake, dress, and feed yourself and your child, and travel to child care and work</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let your child care provider and child spend some time together so they can get to know each other</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to establish a milk expression schedule</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start making extra meals for your family, and storing them in the freezer</li> </ul>				

## BREASTFEEDING AND RETURNING TO WORK CHECKLIST

One week before returning to work:	Done	Working on it	Need to do	Notes
• Continue with your expression and breastfeeding schedule so that it will be similar to what you will be doing when you return to work				
• Decide whether or not you will need a breast pump				
• Do a dry run of your new “before work” routine and make changes as needed				
• Try to get plenty of sleep so that you are ready for your return to work				
• Talk to other mothers who have combined breastfeeding and employment as they can offer suggestions and support				
• Breastfeed frequently in the evenings and on the weekends in order to keep up a plentiful milk supply				

***Take one day at a time.  
Be willing to try new ways to make it work.  
Be proud of any and all of your efforts!***

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## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETURNING TO WORK

### When you return to work:

- If possible, return to work part way through the week. Working 2 or 3 days at first is easier than working an entire week.
- If possible, return to work slowly – start back part time and then gradually increase to full time.
- Take it one day at a time. Do your best to keep up with the work.
- Express your milk according to your established routine.
- Try to breastfeed at least once before you leave for work and as soon as you can after work.
- Talk with your supervisor about how things are going.
- Take care of yourself. Make sure you get enough sleep and that you eat a healthy diet.
- Keep an extra top and some breast pads at work.

### Other ideas for when you return to work:

- Organize lunches, pack the diaper bag and prepare clothes the night before. If using a breast pump, be sure to clean it properly. Remember to freeze any ice packs you want to use the next day.
- Try listening to music, look at a picture of your child or think about feeding your child while you express or pump.
- Breastfeed your child as often as you can whenever you are together. It is not unusual for a baby to want to nurse more frequently once mother returns home from work. Breastfeeding frequently on days off can also help maintain your milk supply.
- The first few weeks will likely be the most challenging. After that most mothers settle into a routine.
- Eat well. Choose healthy foods that are quick and easy to prepare. Proper nutrition will help you maintain your milk supply and give you energy to get through the day.
- Focus on the things that really need to be done. Prioritize. Accept help from family and friends.

Developed and designed by MaineGeneral Medical Center, Augusta and Waterville, Maine.



## TALKING TO YOUR EMPLOYER

Here are some simple steps and suggestions that you can follow when approaching your employer:

### Before your appointment:

- Get the support of your family to continue breastfeeding after you return to work.
- Talk to other mothers who have continued breastfeeding after returning to work. Find out what works for them.
- At least four weeks prior to your return, schedule an appointment with your employer to talk about your return to work.
- Before your appointment, practise what you plan to say to your employer.

### At your appointment:

- Talk to your employer about expressing or pumping breast milk at work. Explain why breastfeeding is important to you and your baby.
- Bring in a list of what would be required to accommodate your needs. Include:
  - A private and secure location
  - Chair
  - Access to a sink with hot and cold running water
  - If at all possible, a refrigerator to store your breast milk
- Discuss any questions or concerns your employer may have.

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## HOW TO EXPRESS BREAST MILK BY HAND



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

1. Use a clean container with a wide opening to collect your milk. “Clean” means that it has been washed in hot soapy water, rinsed well with hot water and left to air dry. A margarine tub works well for hand expression.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water. (Figure 1)
3. To help breast milk flow, you can massage your breasts with a warm washcloth for 5 to 10 minutes. (Figure 2)
4. Hold the clean container near your breast. Place your thumb and first two fingers about 1-1½ inches away from the nipple. (Figure 3)
5. Push your thumb and two fingers straight back toward your chest. (Figure 3)
6. Roll your thumb and two fingers together. (Figure 4)
7. Repeat steps 4, 5, 6 until the flow of milk slows down, then switch to the other breast.
8. Switch breasts a few more times whenever the flow of milk slows down. Be sure to move your thumb and two fingers along all areas around the nipple.



# BREAST PUMPS

## Electric Breast Pump



- This is the best pump to use if you cannot be with your baby right after birth or if you plan to pump for a long time.
- You can pump both breasts at the same time. It will take less time to pump.
- These pumps are usually rented because they are the most expensive. Call your local public health unit to find out about where you can rent this pump.
- Some work insurance plans may pay for the cost of renting the pump.

## Battery Operated Pump

- This is a good pump to use if you plan to pump for a short time or only once in a while.
- Can be used with one hand.
- Easy to carry.
- Need to replace batteries often. It may be best to buy one that can also be plugged into an electrical outlet.



## Manual Hand Pump

- This pump should be used if you plan to pump for a short time or only once in a while.
  - Some can be used with one hand, and others with two hands (depends on the type of hand pump).
  - Easy to carry.
  - Can tire the hands and wrists so it should not be used by mothers with hand, wrist or arm problems.
  - Costs the least amount of money.
- Important: Do not use a pump with a rubber bulb! The suction on this pump is strong and can damage your nipples.



**FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS THAT COME WITH THE BREAST PUMP.**





## STORING BREAST MILK

### Containers for Storing Breast Milk:

- Use glass or hard plastic containers with a tight lid (for example, small jars and bottles with lids).
- Special breast milk freezer bags can also be used.
- Do not use bottle liner bags. These are thinner plastic bags made for bottle feeding.

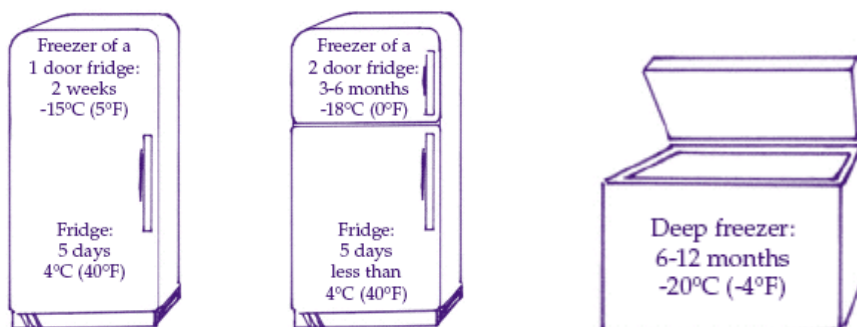
### Cleaning the Containers:

- Wash containers in hot soapy water and rinse well with hot water. Let the containers air dry.

### Tips for Storing Breast Milk at home:

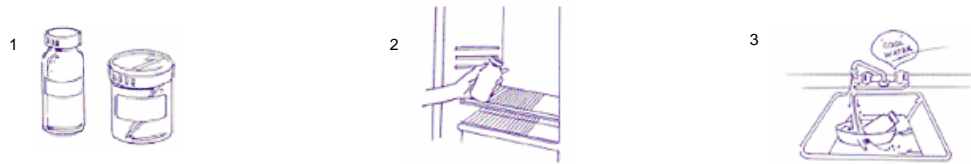
- Store in 2-4 ounce portions to prevent wasting milk.
- Always cool freshly expressed milk before adding it to already cooled or frozen milk.
- Always add a smaller amount of cooled milk to frozen milk.
- Leave a one inch space at the top of the container when freezing.
- Frozen breast milk that has been thawed can be kept in the refrigerator for 24 hours.
- Do not refreeze breast milk once it is thawed.

### Breast Milk can be Stored in the Following Ways:



- Place containers at the back of the fridge and freezer where it is the coldest.
- After the storage time has passed, throw out the breast milk.

## Thawing Frozen Breast Milk:



1. Check the date on the stored breast milk. Use the container with the earliest date first.
2. Thaw frozen breast milk by leaving it in the fridge for 4 hours OR...
3. ...place container under cool running water. Once it has begun to thaw, run warm water to finish thawing.



4. Never thaw at room temperature.
5. Warm breast milk by placing the container in a bowl of very warm water.
6. Do not thaw or heat breast milk on stove or in microwave. Do not refreeze breast milk once it is thawed.

## Other Considerations:

- Use a cooler bag with ice packs to store breast milk or to transport breast milk home at the end of the day.
- Label and date the container of expressed breast milk before putting it into the refrigerator or freezer.
- Defrost frozen breast milk in the refrigerator.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS

As of June 2009

### ***Breastfeeding Support and Pump Rental Information:***

Region of Waterloo Public Health-Healthy Children Info Line:  
519-883-2245

La Leche League Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge:  
1-800-665-4324

Breastfeeding Buddies Peer Support:  
519-772-1016

Community Information Centre:  
519-579-3800

Meet With a Nurse-Early Years Centre:  
Kitchener: 519-571-1626  
Kitchener-Waterloo: 519-741-8585  
Cambridge: 519-740-8353

### ***Infant Feeding Rooms in the Community:***

#### ***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



## REFERENCES & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS

Best Start. *How to be a Family-Friendly Workplace*. Health Nexus, Ontario. (Available to download from [www.beststart.org](http://www.beststart.org) click on “workplace”. Last accessed May 2009)

California Department of Public Health. *WIC Breastfeeding Resources for Employers*. (Available to download at [www2.cdph.ca](http://www2.cdph.ca). Last accessed: May 2009)

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

Department of Labour. *Breastfeeding in the Workplace: A Guide for Employers*. New Zealand (Available to download at [www.dol.govt.nz/publications/breastfeeding/index.html](http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/breastfeeding/index.html) Last accessed: May 2009)

MaineGeneral Medical Center. *Mother-Friendly Worksite Toolkit*. Waterville Maine. (Full toolkit available to order. Some information available on their website [www.maine-general.org](http://www.maine-general.org))

Middlesex-London Health Unit. *Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace*. (Available to download at [www.healthunit.com/articlesPDF/12788.pdf](http://www.healthunit.com/articlesPDF/12788.pdf) Last accessed: May 2009)

Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2008). *Policy on Discrimination Because of Pregnancy and Breastfeeding*. (Available to download at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca) Last accessed: May 2009)

Ontario Public Health Association. (2008). *Creating a Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace*. (Available to download from [www.opha.on.ca](http://www.opha.on.ca) Last accessed: May 2009)

Texas Department of State Health Services. (Resources available to download from [www.dhs.state.tx.us](http://www.dhs.state.tx.us) Last accessed: May 2009)

- *Talking with Your Employer About Breastfeeding*.
- *Breastfeeding and Returning to Work*
- *Become a Mother-Friendly Worksite*

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Business Case for Breastfeeding: Steps for Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite*. (Series of resources to order from [www.hrsa.gov](http://www.hrsa.gov) )

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

Vermont Department of Health. *Information for Employers*. (Available to download from [www.healthvermont.gov/family/breastfeed/employer\\_project.aspx](http://www.healthvermont.gov/family/breastfeed/employer_project.aspx) Last accessed: May 2009)