



The Breastfeeding Project Group

The *Breastfeeding Project Group* are the four women who devised this package to fulfill the requirements of the Breastfeeding Counsellor course at Douglas College.

While attempting to identify a project that would meet the course requirements, individual experiences and discussions with friends and colleagues directed us to begin investigating breastfeeding in the workplace.

We created this information package to assist women and employers in developing “Baby Friendly Workplaces” in all areas where women work outside their home and who are committed to continuing breastfeeding following a return to work from maternity leave. Using this package, women can work with their employer to advocate for the development of workplace policies and practices to encourage and support breastfeeding employees and their families.

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For further information or to order the Breastfeeding Information Package for your workplace, please contact:

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Dear Employer,

There are many factors which contribute to business success. A key factor is the commitment of skilled and experienced employees.

Recent statistics indicate that approximately 60% of the current workforce is made up of women, the majority of whom are of childbearing age.

The World Health Organization, Federal and Provincial governments recognize that breast milk is the “gold standard” for infant nutrition, reducing illness and infection rates in children and increasing productivity in employees. As a result of this knowledge they have developed legislation and position statements to support continuation of breastfeeding following return to work.

We invite you to take a moment to view the enclosed package outlining a simple approach to developing a lactation support program for your organization and describing the advantages to Employers, Employees and families.

We thank you for taking the time to review the information provided and invite you to contact us at the address above for further information or assistance.

Respectfully,
Breastfeeding Project Group
bb/bb



Five Reasons to Support Breastfeeding in Your Workplace

1

Reduced absenteeism.

Save money on personal time/sick time required for employees to stay home to care for sick infants. Breastmilk contains high levels of antibacterial and antiviral properties which increases resistance to illness.¹

2

Reduced staff turnover and loss of skilled workers.

Skilled and experienced staff are more likely to return to work and/or return earlier when supported by employers to continue breastfeeding.²

3

Increased employee productivity.

Healthier infants result in mothers who are less worried about their children and **enhanced focus** on work.³

4

Increased job satisfaction.

Higher workplace satisfaction leads to increased morale and loyalty. These **enhance** the ability of employers to recruit and retain skilled employees.³

5

Enhanced reputation of employer as “family-friendly”.

“Family-friendly” employers gain a reputation in the community as an agency that is concerned with the health and welfare of employees and their families.³

Adapted from *Breastfeeding Support Guide for Employers*. Women's Health Action Trust. www.womens-health.org.nz

1. Cohen R, Mrtek M.B., & Mrtek, R.G. (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):148-53.
2. Cohen R, Mrtek M.B., & Mrtek, R.G. (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):148-53.; Mohrbacher, N. & Stock, J., (2003). *The breastfeeding answer book*. Schaumburg, Illinois. La Leche League International.
3. Galtry, J. & Annandale, M. (2003) Developing breastfeeding-friendly workplaces in new Zealand.; Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies, What Gives These Companies a Competitive Edge?

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Five Benefits of Breastfeeding for Working Mothers and Babies

Babies

1. Fewer infant illnesses from bacterial or viral infections- lower rate of ear infections, diarrhoea, colds/flu, and serious bowel infection in infants.
2. Decreased rates of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome in infants.
3. Higher scores in cognitive development tests (IQ) in exclusively breastfed infants.
4. Lower rates of childhood diabetes, obesity, and childhood cancer in exclusively breastfed infants.
5. Strong mother-baby bond resulting in more confident and easily consolable infant and toddler.

Working Mothers

1. Greater rate of recovery from childbirth: reduces blood loss; aids in safe, steady weight loss after baby's birth; assists in returning uterus to pre-pregnancy size.
2. Reduced incidence of breast and ovarian cancer and osteoporosis in women who have breastfed their babies.
3. Facilitates easier transition back to work following the birth of a baby.
4. Supports women to balance career with family and motherhood.
5. Builds self-confidence and self-reliance in women as mothers and valued employees.



Five Easy Steps to Support Breastfeeding in Your Organization

1 Policy --

Develop a policy that indicates to employees and management that your workplace supports and encourages women to continue breastfeeding when they return to work.

2 Place --

Provide a clean, private space with an electrical outlet nearby to facilitate women to pump or nurse their infants.

3 Time --

Provide extended lunch or coffee breaks that can be made up either before or after work to accommodate women to breastfeed or pump during the workday.

4 Equipment --

Provide a comfortable chair with arm rests, a footstool, a table for supplies, a “Room in Use” sign, a rented or purchased breast pump or a secure place for women to store their own breast pump. Access to a refrigerator or a cooler with icepacks will be needed to store milk safely. Access to hand washing equipment is also needed.

5 Resources --

Encourage employees to create a “library” with information on supporting breastfeeding and resources in the community which can assist women who have questions or concerns. (Contact information for: La Leche League leaders in the local area; Lactation Consultant information; BC Nurses Hotline; local Public Health Units; etc.)



Template of a Workplace Breastfeeding Policy

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We at (*insert workplace*) recognize the importance of breastfeeding for both mother and baby and promote and support employees to continue breastfeeding following return to work after maternity leave. This policy is based on the following “baby-friendly” principles:

- ◆ (*Insert workplace*) recognizes and values the roles of working women in our organization
- ◆ (*Insert workplace*) supports women who return to our workforce, following maternity leave, by providing policies and practices which support continuing breastfeeding.
- ◆ (*Insert workplace*) provides facilities and necessary support to enable women in our employment to balance breastfeeding with their work responsibilities.

Policy Specifics

(*Insert workplace*) supports the following practices with respect to breastfeeding:

1. Supervisory/management staff will advise employees of the breastfeeding policy and available supports in the event they wish to continue breastfeeding following a return to work. All current and prospective staff are informed of this policy.
2. Supervisory/management staff will meet with employees upon return to work to establish reasonable flexibility in scheduling of work assignments and breaks in order to facilitate breastfeeding. The supervisor will strike a balance between operational objectives, work requirements and the needs of the working mother. The employee is responsible to make up for time missed from work.
3. (*Insert workplace*) will provide an appropriate, clean room/area (not a bathroom or closet) where breastfeeding women can:
 - breastfeed an infant brought to work during lunch or breaks
 - Pump breast milk to be stored for later use
4. The breastfeeding room/area contains a comfortable chair with support for arms, a small table, an electrical outlet, a clock and an infant changing table and is private for those women who wish to breastfeed or pump breast milk. It will also contain a locked area where women can store a breast pump securely. The room is situated in an area where other employees will not be disturbed by a crying infant.
5. A refrigerator is available to ensure safe storage of breast milk. Breastfeeding employees are responsible for providing their own containers. Stored milk will be clearly labelled with employees name and date. Employees using the refrigerator are responsible for keeping it clean.
6. Employees who have their infants brought to them for nursing during their breaks, will keep infant care supplies in an area away from their work space and will take them home each day.
7. Employees will clean all supplies and breast pump equipment and store it in an area designated for this purpose, immediately following use.

Adapted from Monash University, Australia: Breastfeeding Policy which can be found at:
www.adm.monash.edu.au/workplace-policy/leave/parental/breastfeeding.html



Relevant Canadian Legislation, Policies and Associated Documentation

1. International Labour Organization (ILO)

- ◆ Convention on Maternity Protection No. 3
- ◆ Convention on Maternity Protection No. 103

Both Conventions have been ratified by Canada.

2. Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Provincial Human Rights Code protects against discrimination on the basis of sex.

3. Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

CEDAW, is a United Nations human rights convention adopted in 1979. It was ratified by Canada in 1982.

4. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989. It has since been ratified by Canada and recognizes the importance of breastfeeding as an essential component of children's rights to optimal health and development.

5. The Baby-Friendly™ Initiative

This international initiative is supported by Health Canada and the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada and has made recommendations to governments at both the Federal and Provincial level with respect to legislation and policy development.





Checklist for Setting Up Breastfeeding Workplace Program

- ✓ Written policy in place and all current and prospective employees informed of it.
- ✓ Individual or group identified to institute and support it (i.e.: human resources department/designate, occupational health and safety department/designate, workplace nurse etc.)
- ✓ A clean, private, comfortable room/space (not a bathroom or closet) and with an electrical outlet, identified for use of women who wish to breastfeed or pump milk during their breaks.
- ✓ Flexibility in scheduling work and/or break time to accommodate lactation breaks for breastfeeding or pumping breast milk.
- ✓ Comfortable chair with arm rests, a small, low table, clock and infant change table.
- ✓ Refrigerator available nearby to safely store pumped breast milk.
- ✓ Sink for washing hands and cleaning breast pump equipment.
- ✓ Employer may elect to purchase a breast pump for employees to use on-site. Employees will purchase their own pump supplies and be responsible for cleaning.
- ✓ Secure area for storing breast pump supplies and infant care supplies for those mother having infants brought in to breast feed.
- ✓ Area to store resource information related to breastfeeding, and the maintenance of breast milk supply following return to work.
- ✓ Sign to indicate the room is currently in use.





Information for Women Planning to Breastfeed Following Return to Work

Returning to work after the birth of your baby

The following offer some suggestions for supporting you to continue breastfeeding after you return to work.

You may choose to have someone bring your baby to you at work so you can breast feed during your breaks, or you may elect to pump your breast milk to give to your baby later.

Whatever your decision, you are providing the “gold standard” for infant nutrition and both your baby and your family will benefit from your decision.

The following are suggestions to help you balance your commitment to breastfeeding with your employment responsibilities and make the transition back to work successfully.

Before you go on maternity Leave:

- ✓ Ask your co-workers or employer what current policies are in place to support breastfeeding women in your workplace.
- ✓ If no current policies or practices are in place, offer the attached information package to your employer and request an appointment to discuss the information.
- ✓ Share the information with other colleagues and garner support for yourself and colleagues who may be in a similar situation in the future.
- ✓ Discuss your plan to continue breastfeeding after your return to work with your employer or supervisor and identify policies that will support you in planning your return to work as a breastfeeding mother.
- ✓ Describe what you will need to facilitate your plan to breastfeed at work; a private space (not in a bathroom or closet) with furniture that will facilitate breastfeeding or pumping and storage of breast milk. Make suggestions about how you and your employer can work together to prepare for your transition back to work.





Information for Women Planning to Breastfeed Following Return to Work cont'd...

Before you return to work:

- ✓ Meet with your care provider before you return to work. Discuss your plans and how you plan to feed your baby when you are at work.
- ✓ Consider meeting with a lactation consultant or breastfeeding counsellor to discuss breast pump options and appropriate use of breast pump.
- ✓ Meet with your supervisor to discuss flexibility of scheduling breaks to accommodate breastfeeding or pumping your breast milk. Include discussion about how you will make up time if needed. (You may choose to start work earlier and/or stay later if you need extended break time)
- ✓ Some women have their baby brought to them so they can breastfeed at lunch or, if your child is being cared for nearby, you may be able to travel to him/her to nurse over a lunch break. You may express or pump your breast milk at other break times during the day.
- ✓ You may plan to breastfeed as soon as you arrive home with your baby. Inform your baby's caregiver so she doesn't feed your baby just before you want to breastfeed.
- ✓ If you plan to give your pumped breast milk by bottle, begin to get your baby used to a cup or bottle several weeks before you return to work.
- ✓ If you plan to feed your baby using expressed breast milk when you are at work, start storing your milk before you return to work. Give yourself at least **2 weeks** to stockpile your milk.
- ✓ Ensure you have written information about the proper storage and labelling of breast milk. Label stored breast milk with your name and the date and time you pumped the milk. (For information on how to store breast milk contact: *La Leche League leaders in your community, community public health nurses, Lactation Consultant in your area or the BC Nurses Hotline.*)
- ✓ Freeze pumped breast milk in small amounts (2-4 ounces) to avoid having to discard unused bottles of milk.
- ✓ Many women find it easier to pack a bag the night before work. (i.e.: clean/sterilized pump supplies, breast milk containers, infant care supplies if baby is being brought to work to nurse, and lunch or snacks)





Information for Women Planning to Breastfeed Following Return to Work cont'd...

When at work:

- ✓ When possible, try to start back to work mid-week. This will reduce time away from your baby in the first few days and help to ease the transition back to work for both you and your baby.
- ✓ If you plan to use a breast pump at work, select one that is suited to your particular needs. Begin pumping ahead of time to build up stores of breast milk for your baby. Practice will ensure you are comfortable using the breast pump and are able to assemble, disassemble and clean the equipment quickly and efficiently and know how long it takes you to pump. “Double pumping” takes less time to pump your milk and you may feel more relaxed and less rushed to finish pumping before your break is over.
- ✓ Review your wardrobe. Separates or clothing with front openings will be more convenient if you are breastfeeding or pumping your milk.
- ✓ Camisoles are convenient for hiding breast pad contours and easy to pull up when it is time to breastfeed or pump.
- ✓ Clothing with a pattern can hide areas where milk has leaked and washable clothing makes cleaning up easier.
- ✓ A handy cardigan or jacket also provides camouflage in the event of leaking. Some women keep an extra shirt or top in their desk drawer.
- ✓ After pumping, clean all equipment and store in an area designated by your employer.
- ✓ Consider nominating your employer for designation as a Breast-feeding Friendly™ workplace if they have implemented a lactation program that supports women to continue breast feeding following a return to work. This will provide encouragement to employers and colleagues to continue to support a Lactation Program and will recognize your employer’s commitment to women and families. For further information contact: www.breastfeedingcanada.ca





Information for Women Planning to Breastfeed Following Return to Work cont'd...

When at work:

Resources with reliable information on breastfeeding-

- ◆ Your public health nurse and local health unit can provide information and support for infant and newborn care following discharge. Many health units have breastfeeding clinics for clients who need help or advice related to breastfeeding.
- ◆ La Leche League- This international organization is dedicated to supporting and helping mothers to breastfeed. La Leche League offers “mother-to-mother” support, information and encouragement in support of breastfeeding. La Leche League meetings occur in many communities and are facilitated by volunteer leaders.
- ◆ Lactation Consultants are available in many communities in community and hospital settings to assist and support women who have breastfeeding challenges.

Web Resources

The following websites provide information related to breastfeeding and breastfeeding support.

www.la lecheleague.org

www.infactcanada.ca

<http://www.kellymom.com/>

<http://www.breastfeedingonline.com/newman.shtml>





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