

# Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Strategy

A Toolkit for  
Employers



This toolkit is designed to help you develop a strategy to support breastfeeding mothers in your workplace. For more information or consultation, please call 519-575-4400 or visit [www.projecthealth.ca](http://www.projecthealth.ca)

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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 2012, 67.8 per cent of women with children under six years of age were employed, more than double to the percentage in 1976, when only 31.4% 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, including diarrhea and infections of the respiratory tract, ear and urinary tract. Evidence also suggests breastfeeding may decrease the risk of obesity, diabetes, and some childhood cancers.<sup>2, 3, 4</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.<sup>3, 4</sup>

It is these benefits that have led the World Health Organization and Health Canada to recommend that infants be exclusively breastfed for the first six months, and continue breastfeeding up to 24 months of age and beyond with appropriate complementary feeding.<sup>2</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** – Breastfeeding has been associated with a decrease in parental employee absenteeism as a result of a sick child.<sup>5</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>6</sup>
- ▶ **Higher productivity and loyalty** – One study identified that employers who support breastfeeding in the workplace contribute to mothers' peace of mind, decreasing stress and increasing productivity.<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ **Improved public relations** – By providing a program to support breastfeeding employees, your ability to recruit top-notch staff will be enhanced.<sup>8</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.

# The Four Pillars of a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace

## 1. 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
- ▶ Refrigerator (or nearby access) for storage of breast milk
- ▶ Adequate lighting
- ▶ Wastebasket
- ▶ Information on support services

### Optimal features:

- ▶ Electric breast pump/storage area for breast pumps
- ▶ Lending library of informative books on working and breastfeeding
- ▶ Bulletin board
- ▶ Access to a breastfeeding expert

### Other considerations:

- ▶ Use of sign-up sheet for the purpose of room scheduling
- ▶ Use of first-come, first-serve policy
- ▶ Disinfecting solution for cleaning up spills
- ▶ Employee ownership for care and cleaning of the room



**Breastfeeding room examples:**

**1. Basic Breastfeeding Room**



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 seating
- Table and counter
- Sink with hot and cold running water and soap
- Adequate lighting
- Wastebasket
- Electrical outlet

**2. Enhanced Breastfeeding Room**

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 and soap
- Adequate lighting
- Wastebasket
- 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



## 2. 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:

- ▶ Use of lactation breaks over and above existing break and meal times without needing to make up the extra time

### Other Considerations:

- ▶ Opportunity for on site or “close-by” child care where a mother can go to feed her child
- ▶ Opportunity for child care provider to bring child to the workplace to be fed
- ▶ Ability to work from home
- ▶ Ability to “ease-back” into full-time
- ▶ Ability to temporarily work part-time

## 3. Education

Breastfeeding education needs to begin prior to pregnancy or during pregnancy for all employees to make an informed decision about infant feeding and support breastfeeding mothers in the workplace.

### Basic Features:

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

### Optimal Features:

- ▶ Promotion of the benefits of breastfeeding
- ▶ Prenatal package for all expectant employees
- ▶ Onsite breastfeeding classes for all expectant employees
- ▶ Lactation support contracted from external source
- ▶ Specific resources about balancing breastfeeding and job responsibilities

## 4. 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 that 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
- ▶ Development of lactation support program that includes employee (mothers, co-workers, etc.) participation
- ▶ Electronic options for breastfeeding employees to connect with each other
- ▶ Designated breastfeeding resource person

## What You Need to Get Started<sup>9</sup>

### 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, define the goals the program is hoping to achieve, 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 Breastfeeding Accommodation Policy

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

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

## Ideas for Smaller Businesses<sup>10</sup>

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.
  - Install blinds for privacy
  - 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.
- ▶ Can you adapt a first aid room?
- ▶ Use screens and “Do not disturb” notices to make a cubicle more private.
- ▶ Contact a local Public Health Unit to assist you in finding an appropriate space.



## Promoting Your Program

Once you have implemented your program, it is important to promote it to both potential users and 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 not to breastfeed.



### 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 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

Questions geared toward mothers who have benefited from the service and will no longer be using it. You can collect information on whether the program was valuable and what improvements to make.

#### 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 breastfeeding 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<sup>11</sup>

<b>Human Resources</b>	
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	
<b>Current Policies</b>	
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?	
<b>Program Components</b>	
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?	

<b>Program Components (continued)</b>	
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: _____
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: _____ <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

## Accommodations for Support of Breastfeeding in the Workplace<sup>9</sup>

Listed below are several components that can be used to support breastfeeding 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: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Location:

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

#### 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: \_\_\_\_\_



## Flexibility:

### Work Schedule:

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

### 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

### 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

## 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 breastfeeding friendly policy

## Sample Policy<sup>11</sup>

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 Letter to Employee<sup>9</sup>

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 Breastfeeding 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 Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace program are:

**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 \_\_\_\_\_.

**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 \_\_\_\_\_.

**Support:** Please feel free to contact \_\_\_\_\_ at any time with questions, comments, or concerns.

**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,

## Lactation Support Feedback Form<sup>11</sup> For Breastfeeding Employees

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

	<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>
<b>Education</b>					
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					
<b>Support</b>					
Support from supervisor					
Support from co-workers					
Mother to mother support group					

Which lactation support services did you find most helpful?

What workplace challenges made it difficult to reach your feeding goals for your child?

What recommendations do you feel the company should consider to further improve the program?

If you marked “Did not Participate” for any of the answers above, please indicate your reason for not participating:

Other comments:

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

## Lactation Support Feedback Form<sup>11</sup> 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 the following lactation program 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:**

## Sample Paycheque Messages<sup>12</sup>

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.”



## 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

## Additional Resources for Employers

[Breastfeeding and Returning to Work](#). Texas Department of State Health Services (2014).

[Breastfeeding in the Workplace: A Guide for Employers](#). New Zealand Department of Labour (2010).

[Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace](#). Ontario Public Health Association. (2008).

[How to be a Family-Friendly Workplace](#). Best Start (2010).

[Mother-Friendly Worksite Toolkit](#). MaineGeneral Health (2013). (Full toolkit available to order on their website [www.maine-general.org](http://www.maine-general.org))

[Policy on Discrimination Because of Pregnancy and Breastfeeding](#). Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2014).

[The Business Case for Breastfeeding: Easy Steps to Supporting Breastfeeding Employees](#). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[WIC Breastfeeding Resources for Employers](#). California Department of Public Health (2011).

**Resources for Employees**

## Breastfeeding and Returning to Work Checklist<sup>9</sup>

<b>Two to four weeks before returning to work:</b>	<b>Done</b>	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>Need to Do</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Tell your family that you want to continue breastfeeding after returning to work and ask for their support				
Schedule an appointment with your employer/supervisor at least four weeks prior to your return to discuss returning to work. Assure him/her that you will be able to maintain your daily weekly work schedule				
Consider taking extra time off. Talk to your employer or human resources department about your options				
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				
Let your child care provider and child spend some time together so they can get to know each other				
Decide whether or not you will need a breast pump				
Begin pumping and storing your milk				
Start making extra meals for your family, and storing them in the freezer				
<b>One week before returning to work:</b>				
Continue to pump and store your milk using a schedule similar to what you will be doing when you return to work				
Do a dry run of your new morning 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. Ask them for suggestions and support				
Breastfeed frequently in the evenings and on the weekends in order to maintain a good 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!**

## Talking to Your Employer<sup>13</sup>

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.
- ▶ Practise what you plan to say to your employer.

### At your appointment:

- ▶ Explain why breastfeeding is important to you, your baby and how it benefits the company.
- ▶ Discuss your return to work date and whether you can start off working part time.
- ▶ Talk to your employer about nursing your child or expressing breast milk at work.
- ▶ Bring in a list of what would be required to accommodate your needs, including:
  - A private and secure location
  - Chair
  - Access to a sink with hot and cold running water
  - If possible, a refrigerator to store your breast milk
- ▶ Discuss any questions or concerns your employer may have.



## Other Considerations for Returning to Work<sup>9</sup>

### 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.

## Expressing and Storing Breast Milk

Your breast milk provides the optimal nutrition for your infant. Feeding from the breast is the natural and normal way to provide breast milk to your infant. Sometimes, there are reasons to express breast milk such as; separation from your baby after birth, to soften engorged breasts that are too hard for your baby to latch onto, or to increase milk supply. You can express breast milk by hand or by using a pump.

Expressing breast milk is very different from breastfeeding. Every woman is different. Many things affect the amount of milk expressed such as; baby's age, time of day, the amount of milk your breasts hold, and comfort level. Usually, a baby feeding at the breast does a better job at removing milk from your breasts.

### Tips for Expressing Breast Milk

Express early, express often. You should start expressing milk as early as possible to build your milk supply if your baby is not feeding at the breast. Express a minimum of 8 times in 24 hours, including through the night, to maintain and/or increase your milk supply. Express each breast until the breast is effectively drained.

Being comfortable equals more milk. Set the pump to the lowest setting before turning it on. You can gradually increase the setting to a suction that is comfortable for you. Using a higher suction setting does not mean you will pump more milk and may cause damage to your nipples.

Use your hands. Recent research shows that gently squeezing your breasts while pumping and doing hand expression after pumping can help empty your breasts and greatly increase your milk volume.

Mimic your baby's suck rhythm. Babies suck fast at the start of a feed and then slow down when the milk begins to flow from the breast. You can adjust your pump speeds to mimic this rhythm.

Pick a good quality pump. Make sure the pump fits. Good quality pumps offer different size flanges/breast shields (which may need to be purchased separately). It is important to look at your nipple size, not breast size. You will know the pump is a good fit if you can see some space around your nipple as it is pulled into the flange/breast shield tunnel. The tunnel is too small if your nipple rubs, and too large if more than the areola is being pulled into the tunnel.

**The Region of Waterloo Public Health does not recommend sharing or purchasing a used breast pump as milk in non-hospital grade pumps can back up into parts of the pump that are difficult to clean. Many brands do not offer replacement parts.**



## Methods of Breast Milk Expression

For all pumps, follow the manufacturer's instructions for assembly, cleaning and use.

Type of Expression	Good Option For	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Hand Expression</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Removing colostrum in the first few days (most effective method)</li> <li>▶ Softening engorged breasts before breastfeeding</li> <li>▶ Short term or occasional expression of breast milk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Free, no equipment needed</li> <li>▶ Available anytime, anywhere</li> <li>▶ With practice, some women may find it easier to trigger a let-down of milk with this method</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ For long term expression of breast milk, may be more difficult to maintain your milk supply</li> <li>▶ Requires use of hands to express</li> </ul>
<b>Hospital-Grade Electric Pump</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increasing and maintaining your milk supply long term (most effective method)</li> <li>▶ Building your milk supply if your baby is not feeding at the breast</li> <li>▶ Longer term pumping or exclusive pumping, if required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Able to pump both breasts at the same time</li> <li>▶ Able to control suction strength and speed</li> <li>▶ Available to rent (check with your local hospital or a medical supply store)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Expensive to purchase but available to rent</li> <li>▶ Heavy to transport</li> <li>▶ Requires an electrical outlet</li> </ul>
<b>Electric/ Battery Operated Pump</b> Double Electric Pump 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ More frequent expression of breast milk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Hands free, portable models available</li> <li>▶ Option to power using batteries or an electrical outlet</li> <li>▶ Some models offer rechargeable batteries</li> <li>▶ Able to control suction strength and speed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ May run out of batteries</li> <li>▶ Can be expensive to purchase</li> </ul>
Single Electric Pump 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Short term or occasional expression of breast milk once milk supply has been established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Only requires use of one hand</li> <li>▶ Option to power using batteries or an electrical outlet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ May experience lower suction strength</li> <li>▶ More time consuming to pump one breast at a time</li> <li>▶ May run out of batteries</li> </ul>
<b>Manual Hand Pump</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Short term or occasional expression of breast milk once milk supply has been established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Small and easy to carry</li> <li>▶ Does not require batteries or an electrical outlet</li> <li>▶ Easy to clean</li> <li>▶ Least expensive pump</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Requires use of hands to pump</li> <li>▶ More difficult to mimic baby's suck rhythm</li> </ul>

**IMPORTANT:** Do not use rubber bulb pumps. These pumps may damage your nipples as the suction is hard to control and may increase the risk of breast milk contamination because the bulb is hard to clean.

## Expressing Breast Milk by Hand<sup>14</sup>

Most women are able to express breast milk by hand.

You may need to express breast milk if:

- ▶ Your baby is having difficulty with latching
- ▶ Your breasts are too hard for your baby to latch
- ▶ You want to give your baby breast milk when you are away from your baby
- ▶ You need to increase your breast milk supply

You can express your breast milk by hand or by using a breast pump. Hand expression takes time to learn but will become easier and faster as you practice. It involves no cost, is always available and can be done anytime, anywhere.

### How to express breast milk by hand:

	<p>1. Wash your hands with soap and water</p>
	<p>2. If your baby is healthy, use a “clean” glass or hard plastic (BPA free) container to collect your expressed breast milk. “Clean” means to wash in hot soapy water, rise well with hot water and leave to air dry on a clean surface away from where food is made.</p>
	<p>3. To help breast milk to drop, try any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Place a warm towel on your breast for a few minutes</li> <li>▶ Gently massage your breast towards the nipple</li> <li>▶ Gently roll your nipple between thumb and finger</li> </ul>

... continued on next page

	<p>4. Place your thumb and first 2 fingers along the outer edge of the dark area (areola)</p>
	<p>5. Push your thumb and 2 fingers straight back toward your chest.</p>
	<p>6. Gently compress your breast using your thumb and fingers and roll fingers towards your nipple; then relax your fingers.</p>

Repeat steps 4, 5 and 6 until the flow of breast milk slows down then switch to the other breast.

**Tips for expressing breast milk:**

- ▶ Express in the morning, when your breasts feel fullest or after breastfeeding your baby.
- ▶ Be patient. You may only get a few drops of breast milk when first learning to express.
- ▶ Move your thumb and fingers in different positions around your nipple to ensure that all the breast milk ducts are emptied.
- ▶ Switch breasts whenever the flow of breast milk slows down.
- ▶ Most women are able to express breast milk by hand; however you can also express breast milk using a breast pump.

## Storing Epressed Breast Milk<sup>14</sup>

### Containers for Storing Breast Milk:

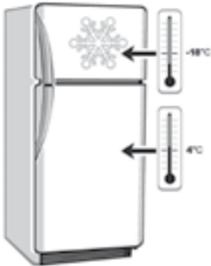
- ▶ Use glass or hard plastic (BPA free) containers with an air-tight lid (for example, small jars and bottles with lids).
- ▶ Special breast milk freezer bags can also be used.
- ▶ Do not use bottle liner bags. These are thinner plastic bags that may break when frozen.

### Cleaning the Containers:

- ▶ Wash containers in hot soapy water and rinse well with hot water. Let the containers air dry on a dry clean surface away from where food is made.

If your baby is premature (born too early) or in the hospital, speak to your nurse about storing breast milk and cleaning containers. Sterilized containers may be provided by the hospital.

### Breast milk can be stored in the following ways:

	<p>Freezer of a 2 Door Refrigerator -18°C or 0°F for 3-6 months</p> <p>Refrigerator &lt; 4°C or 40°F for 5 days</p>		<p>Deep Freezer Chest or Upright -20°C or -4°F for 6-12 months</p>
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### Important

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Freshly expressed breast milk left at room temperature for more than 6-8 hours should be thrown out

### Storing Tips

- ▶ Refrigerate or chill freshly expressed breast milk within 1 hour of expressing if you are not going to feed it to your baby within 6-8 hours.
- ▶ Label containers with date and time.
- ▶ Store in smaller amounts to prevent wasting breast milk.
- ▶ Always cool freshly expressed milk before adding it to already cool or frozen breast milk.
- ▶ Leave a 1 inch space at the top of the container when freezing.

## Thawing Frozen Breast Milk

		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> 
<p>1. Check the date on the stored breast milk. Use the container with the earliest date first.</p>	<p>2. Thaw frozen breast milk by leaving it in the refrigerator for 4-24 hours.</p>	<p>3. Place container under cool water running. Once it has begun to thaw, run warm water to finish thawing.</p>
		
<p>4. Never thaw at room temperature.</p>	<p>5. Warm breast milk by placing the container in a bowl of very warm water for no more than 15 minutes.</p>	<p>6. Do not thaw or heat breast milk in the microwave. Do not refreeze once it has thawed.</p>

**Do not refreeze breast milk once it has started to thaw.**

## Breastfeeding Support in Waterloo Region

### **Breastfeeding Buddies Peer Support**

519-772-1016

<http://chd.region.waterloo.on.ca/en/childfamilyhealth/breastfeedingsupports.asp>

### **La Leche League Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge**

1-800-665-4324

<http://www.lllc.ca/lllc-kitchenerwaterloo-wednesday-pm>

### **Region of Waterloo Public Health**

519-575-4400

[www.regionofwaterloo.ca/ph](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/ph)

### **Telehealth Ontario**

1-866-797-0000

<http://www.ontario.ca/health-and-wellness/get-medical-advice-telehealth-ontario>



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- 10 Department of Labour Breastfeeding in the Workplace: a Guide for employers [www.dol.govt.nz](http://www.dol.govt.nz)
- 11 Reprinted and adapted with the permission of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; The Business Case for Breastfeeding: Steps for Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite.
- 12 Adapted from the California WIC Program.
- 13 Reprinted and adapted with the permission of Texas Department of State Health Services.
- 14 Adapted and reprinted from Breastfeeding Your Baby with permission of Toronto Public Health.