

Network for a Healthy California – Worksite Program

The following suggestions can help you promote breastfeeding as a means of helping female employees and their infants stay healthier.

A GUIDE TO ESTABLISHING A BREASTFEEDING-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

Doctors recommend that babies breastfeed exclusively for six months, and continue to breastfeed for at least the first year of life. One of the top reasons many women stop breastfeeding early is returning to work. By taking a few simple steps, employers can create breastfeeding-friendly workplaces to allow women to return to work and continue to breastfeed their babies as recommended.

Why encourage employees to breastfeed their babies?

It's Cost-Effective

Employers who support their breastfeeding employees experience greater job productivity, including:

- less employee absenteeism since breastfed babies get sick less often and less severely;
- decreased health care costs since breastfed babies require fewer doctors visits, prescriptions, and hospitalizations;
- improved employee satisfaction and morale;
- increased employee loyalty and retention; and
- improved corporate image and recruitment incentive.

It's Healthy For Mothers and Babies

Mothers who breastfeed experience:

- additional calories used after pregnancy;
- increased spacing between pregnancies;
- decreased risk of breast and ovarian cancer;
- decreased risk of diabetes; and
- better management of stress.

Babies who are breastfed experience:

- fewer ear, respiratory, and intestinal infections;
- decreased risk of allergies and asthma; and
- decreased risk of developing chronic diseases/conditions such as diabetes, certain cancers, overweight/obesity, and high cholesterol.
- fewer doctor's visits and hospitalizations

What is a breastfeeding-friendly workplace?

A breastfeeding-friendly workplace recognizes and supports the need of breastfeeding mothers to take time to express (pump) her breast milk in a clean, comfortable, and private space (not in the restroom) while she is separated from her baby during the workday.

At a minimum, a written policy (policy template available at http://www.labestbabies.org/pdf/BF_Policy_Brief.pdf) should be developed and shared with the employees that includes the following information:

- the company expects employees and management to have a positive and accepting attitude to women who return to work and continue to breastfeed;
- breastfeeding employees will be allowed to use break times to express their milk; and
- a clean, comfortable, and private space separate from the restroom that has an electrical outlet and is close to the employee's work area will be provided to breastfeeding employees for expressing their milk.

Additional recommendations for creating a breastfeeding-friendly workplace

In addition to the written policy, it is recommended that workplaces:

- dedicate a room in the building as a permanent “Lactation Room” for all breastfeeding employees to use;
- allow a flexible time schedule to accommodate for expressing milk;
- provide options of part-time work, telecommuting/working from home, or job sharing to breastfeeding employees to ease the transition back to work;
- provide extended maternity leave beyond the time allowed under the California Family Rights Act;
- provide referrals to breastfeeding resources and services in the community;
- incorporate breastfeeding information into employee wellness program; and
- encourage the formation of a lunchtime breastfeeding mother support group at the worksite.

California Law for the Support of Breastfeeding:

CALIFORNIA LACTATION ACCOMODATION LAW (Chapter 3.8, Section 1030, Part 3 of Division 2 of the Labor Code)

This law requires all California employers to provide reasonable amount of break time and make a reasonable effort to provide space other than a toilet stall, close to the employee’s work area, to accommodate an employee desiring to express breastmilk for her baby. The break time shall be unpaid if the break time does not run concurrently with the rest time authorized for the employee. An employer is not required to provide break for pumping if taking break time beyond the usual time allotted for breaks would seriously disrupt the operations of the employers. Violation of this chapter is subject to a civil penalty of \$100.

Resources

Resources and links with more information on breastfeeding and establishing breastfeeding-friendly workplaces.

- American Academy of Pediatrics. Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk PEDIATRICS Vol. 115 No. 2 February 2005, pp. 496-506
<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/pediatrics;115/2/496>
- California Department of Public Health – Employed/Working Mothers’ Breastfeeding Resources.
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/healthyliving/childfamily/Pages/GoingBacktoWorkorSchool.aspx>
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention Healthier Worksite Initiative – Lactation Support Program.
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/lactation/index.htm>
- San Diego Breastfeeding Coalition – Breastfeeding & the Bottom Line: Breastfeeding in the Workplace.
<http://www.breastfeeding.org/info/bfcdrom.html>
- Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles – Breastfeeding Works Project. www.breastfeedla.org and <http://www.breastfeedingworks.org>
- Link to the Workplace Policy Template: LA Best Babies Network, http://www.labestbabies.org/pdf/BF_Poicy_Brief.pdf
- HRSA’s Business Case for Breastfeeding materials:
<http://ask.hrsa.gov/detail.cfm?PubID=MCH00251>