

Supporting Breastfeeding Employees: Breastfeeding Benefits Everyone

Research clearly shows that breastfeeding is best for babies and healthiest for mothers, but did you know that supporting breastfeeding mothers also is good for business?

Supporting breastfeeding employees can save your business money.

- **Breastfeeding employees miss work less often.** One-day absences to care for sick children occur less than half as often for breastfeeding vs. formula-feeding mothers.
- **Breastfeeding lowers health care costs.** Participation in a lactation support program at work is associated with an annual savings of \$240,000 in health care costs. (See Business Case for Breastfeeding at the link below.)
- **Investing in a worksite lactation support program** can have these benefits:
 - ★ Decreased turnover rates
 - ★ Health care savings
 - ★ Positive public relations
 - ★ Increased employee productivity and loyalty

Basic lactation support is easy to provide.

- **Privacy to Express Milk.** This can be a private office or an onsite, designated lactation room with an electrical outlet, where breastfeeding employees can use a pump to express milk during the work day. Employees should never be asked to express milk or breastfeed in a restroom.
- **Flexible Breaks.** Breastfeeding mothers need to express milk about every three hours, or 2-3 times during a typical work day. Milk expression takes about 15-20 minutes, plus time to go to and from the lactation room.
- **Education.** Employees value information that they receive through their worksite. Brochures, posters, classes, and other resources can help ease the transition back to work.
- **Support.** Supportive policies and management set the tone in the workplace, and send the message to all employees that breastfeeding is valued. This helps breastfeeding employees feel confident in their ability to continue breastfeeding after returning to work.

Where can I learn more?

The Department of Health and Human Services' Business Case for Breastfeeding is a comprehensive breastfeeding support program for businesses, including an extensive toolkit of resources. Download materials at www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/government-in-action/business-case.html



South Carolina Program For Infant/Toddler Care

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