Breastfeeding Benefits
The Bottom Line

Women returning to work after maternity leave want to be successful both as employees and as mothers. You can help by providing an environment supportive of breastfeeding and as a result, you’ll also help your company’s bottom line through:

- Lower health care costs
- Fewer work absences
- Reduced turnover rate of experienced employees
- Higher productivity
- Increased employee morale and positive public relations

Breastfeeding is recommended by major medical and professional organizations including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), and the U.S. Surgeon General among others. That’s because breastfeeding boosts an infant’s immune system which helps to lower the risk of infections and illnesses such as ear infections, respiratory infections, dermatitis and gastrointestinal disorders. The health impact is even greater for infants enrolled in daycare centers where exposure to germs and viruses is more frequent. For mom’s, breastfeeding a child means a faster recovery from pregnancy and childbirth and a lower risk of breast cancer and osteoporosis.

For employers, the reduced cost for breastfed infants may mean lower medical insurance claims. Babies who are not breastfed visit the doctor more often, spend more days in the hospital and require more prescriptions than breastfed infants. In fact, for every 1,000 babies not breastfed, there are an additional 2,033 physician visits, 212 days in the hospital and 609 extra prescriptions for three illnesses alone: ear, respiratory and gastrointestinal infection.1

Supporting new mothers with a worksite lactation program may also mean fewer work absences are needed to care for childhood illnesses. One-day absences to care for sick children occur more than twice as often for mothers of formula feeding infants.2 A lactation program can also mean the difference between losing or retaining an experienced employee. Employees are more likely to return to work after childbirth if their workplace provides a supportive environment for continued breastfeeding.

Establishing A Program

Providing a basic lactation program for employees doesn’t involve extensive resources. Just a private place for mothers to express milk regularly, company-wide support of the initiative and flexible schedules for mothers to express milk two or three times a day. For more information on combining employment and breastfeeding, contact the following organizations:

- International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) at ilca.org
- Health professionals
- Local breastfeeding coalitions
- Women, Infants & Children Program through your local health department
- La Leche League at 1-800-laleche or lalecheleague.org
- US Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women’s Health at 1-800-994-9662 or womenshealth.gov
- March of Dimes at marchofdimes.com
- Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition at hmhb.org
- Virginia Department of Labor at doli.virginia.gov
- Virginia Department of Health at vdh.state.va.us


Reasonable Break Time For Nursing Mothers

HR 3590 EAS/PP SEC. 4207.

In March 2010, the Affordable Care Act was signed into law and made the following amendments to Section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938:

“(r)(1) An employer shall provide—

“(A) a reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for 1 year after the child’s birth each time such employee has need to express the milk; and “(B) a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.

“(2) An employer shall not be required to compensate an employee receiving reasonable break time under paragraph (1) for any work time spent for such purpose.

“(3) An employer that employs less than 50 employees shall not be subject to the requirements of this subsection, if such requirements would impose an undue hardship by causing the employer significant difficulty or expense when considered in relation to the size, financial resources, nature, or structure of the employer’s business.

“(4) Nothing in this subsection shall preempt a State law that provides greater protections to employees than the protections provided for under this subsection.”

For more information please contact:

Virginia Department of Labor
doli.virginia.gov
(804) 371-3104

Virginia Department of Health:
Women, Infants & Children Program
vdh.state.va.us
(888)942-3663
Creating a Wellness Room

Workplaces can be fast-paced, stressful environments. Employers are realizing that encouraging breaks for staff to recharge not only fosters goodwill among employees, it can contribute to a more productive workplace.

Creating a wellness room — either from an unused space or by adapting an existing quiet room — can be an inexpensive solution with several uses:

- stress management room to refresh
- wellness library with health lifestyle resources
- Mother’s room offering privacy for nursing moms to express milk regularly.

**Designate a place** in your building that can serve as a wellness room. Choose a room that is safe and clean and at least a 4’ x 5’ space. It should be easily accessible for employees but insulated from noise and workday distractions. If possible, locate the space near the break room or restrooms. However, a restroom is not acceptable as a mother’s room.

**Furnish your room** for comfort. Look for unused furniture in the office that can be relocated to your Wellness Room. Consider getting employee input on what would make the room appealing. Employees may even want to bring unused items from home. Painting the room and adding an area rug can make the space more soothing.

At a minimum, you will need these items:

- Small table
- Comfortable chair or couch
- Lamp/lighting that is adjustable
- Clock
- Shelving
- Locking door
- Power outlet
- Shelving for library materials

If you can, add these:

- Fish tank or water feature
- DVD and CD player
- small refrigerator or cooler
- breastfeeding educational information

**Establish a brief set of rules in order to protect the purpose of the room.** Let employees know that the room should not be used for other purposes such as a break room, meeting room, or a place to make phone calls or access the Internet.

For more detailed information, you can request a copy of the Business Case for Breastfeeding toolkit. Please contact Anthem’s Health & Preventive Services at healthandpreventive@anthem.com or 866-722-6272.
We are proud to support you in both your role as a mother and as an employee by providing a list of resources for breastfeeding help and support.

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Where to find breastfeeding help and support:

- Your health care provider or other health professionals
- International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) at ilca.org
- Local breastfeeding coalitions
- Pumping mother’s support – pumpingmoms.org
- Working and pumping – workandpump.com
- Women, Infants & Children Program through your local health department
- La Leche League at 1-800-laleche or lalecheleague.org
- US Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women’s Health at 1-800-994-9662 or womenshealth.gov
- March of Dimes at marchofdimes.com
- Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition at hmhb.org
- Virginia Department of Labor at doli.virginia.gov
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