

HOW TO CONTINUE BREASTFEEDING AFTER RETURNING TO PAID WORK



La Leche League of
Colorado & Wyoming



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WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR NURSING MOTHERS ACT

Colorado is the 16th state to pass legislation regarding breastfeeding support in the workplace. Effective August, 2008, Colorado employers are required to make the following accommodations for breastfeeding employees:

- Provide reasonable time (unpaid or paid break and/or meal time) for mothers to express milk at work
- Make reasonable efforts to provide suitable, private space for this purpose
- Not discriminate against women for expressing milk in the workplace

The full text of the law can be found at www.coloradobreastfeedingtaskforce.org

3 KEYS FOR BREASTFEEDING AFTER RETURNING TO WORK

Research shows that the majority of breastfeeding women wean their infants within their first month back at paid work. Not you! Here are some keys that will help you succeed.

1. **Tap into the power of Sisterhood** – The most important thing is to connect with other breastfeeding, working moms. There are many avenues: friends, co-workers, neighborhood, childbirth class, place of worship, LLL groups, online networking forums (iVillage, CafeMom, Meetup, MilkMemos.com), etc.
2. **Educate yourself on workplace lactation** – Check out www.coloradobreastfeeding.org for information on the Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act. Begin mentally preparing for your return to work. Talk to a lactation consultant and/or working, breastfeeding mom about the time, space and support you will need to pump (or nurse your baby) at work. Strategize on the specifics for your work environment. Download a checklist of [pump at work essentials](#) (see milkmemos.com resources). Consider reading the book *The Milk Memos: How Real Moms Learned to Mix Business with Babies – and How You Can, Too* (by Cate Colburn-Smith & Andrea Serrette) (available at libraries & bookstores).
3. **Ask your employer for lactation accommodation** – One of the biggest inhibitors to workplace lactation support is the lack of stated demand. Sure, breastfeeding can be an awkward topic to bring up with your supervisor or co-workers. But having the conversation is SO worth it. Boost your confidence by preparing an outline (or script, even) for the discussion. It might look something like this:
 - a. Intentions (I intend to do a great job at work and continue providing human milk for my baby...)
 - b. Employer benefits (Supporting breastfeeding in the workplace is good for business...) (see next page)
 - c. Health benefits (This is very important for me because...) (keep this brief!) (see next page)
 - d. Accommodations proposal (I've thought about how to make this work, and here's what I propose in terms of when and where I'll pump, who can back me up, how we can adjust my schedule, etc.)
 - e. More information (Here's information on the [Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act](#), resources for employers from [Colo. Dept. of Labor](#), [Colo. Breastfeeding Coalition](#), etc.) (reference the [Employer Toolkit](#) on the Dept. of Labor and Breastfeeding Coalition websites)

Chances are that you'll get the time, space and support you ask for. You can do it!

LACTATION PROGRAM BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

Research proves that workplace lactation programs/support:

- Reduce short term and long term health costs (because mothers and babies are healthier)
- Reduce absenteeism (because breastfed babies are sick far less often)
- Improve productivity
- Improve employee job satisfaction and morale
- Improve loyalty and retention (lower turnover)
- Enhance company image in the eyes of customers, potential employees, and the community at large

For every dollar invested in basic lactation programs, employers see a \$2 return on investment
(U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services)

FAST HEALTH FACTS

Babies who are NOT breastfed are: 100% more likely to have middle ear infections, 250% more likely to suffer lower respiratory diseases, 35% more likely to develop asthma, and 65% more likely to develop Type 2 Diabetes.*

Mothers who do NOT breastfeed are: 40% more likely to develop breast cancer, 25% more likely to develop ovarian cancer, and 5-15% more likely to suffer from Type 2 Diabetes.*

For every 1,000 babies NOT breastfed, there are: 2,033 excess doctor's office visits, 212 excess days of hospitalization, and 609 excess prescriptions.**

Mothers who feed their infants formula have more than twice the number of one-day absences to care for sick children than mother who breastfeed.***

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), U.S. Surgeon General, American Academy of Family Physicians and myriad other health organizations recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a baby's life, and continued breastfeeding for at least one year.

*"Breastfeeding and Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes in Developed Countries" (April 2007) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

**Ball & Wright, 1999. Healthcare costs of formula feeding in the first year of life

***Cohen, 1995. Comparison of maternal absenteeism and infant illness rates ...

WORKPLACE LACTATION ACCOMMODATION ESSENTIALS

Time: In an 8-9 hour work day, most women need 2-3 pumping sessions lasting about 15 minutes each. Over time, as their babies grow, women typically need fewer pumping sessions. This can be paid break/meal time, or unpaid break time. If necessary, the beginning and/or ending time of work can be adjusted to accommodate these breaks.

Space: This should be a clean, private area (not a toilet stall or public restroom) that is reasonably nearby your work location. If your employer cannot dedicate a small, private room, be creative! Mothers have used: spare/borrowed office, manager's office, conference room, supplies room, server/IT room, inventory room, dressing room, cubicle area with privacy screen, curtain or cloak, employee break room (temporarily!)

Support: Mothers depend upon manager and coworker support and flexibility in accommodating pumping breaks. A written lactation policy will solidify support, standardize implementation, and minimize confusion and debate. Sample lactation policies are available at coloradobreastfeeding.org.