Promoting Employee Wellness Through Breastfeeding Support

**Employer Responsibilities**

*Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act*

All 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.cobfc.org.

**Employers Benefits**

Supporting a breastfeeding employee brings a business a 3:1 Return on Investment (ROI) through:

- Lower health care costs
- Lower employee absenteeism rates due to healthier babies
- Lower turnover rates
- Higher employee productivity and loyalty
- Enhances company image in the eyes of customers, potential employees, and the community at large


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**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.

Source: 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

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**How to Comply With the Law and Meet the Basic Needs of Breastfeeding Employees**

**Develop a lactation policy and inform employees**

Include the rationale for the policy and describe the accommodations available. Communicate how the business supports breastfeeding employees regularly and include at new employee orientation, highlighting the business advantages.

**Provide privacy for milk expression and allow for flexible breaks**

This can be a woman’s private office if it locks or a designated lactation room. If a small room cannot be designated, be creative! Employees have used spare/borrowed offices, dressing rooms, a cubicle area with a privacy screen, conference rooms, or inventory rooms. For ideas visit www.womenshealth.gov, Employer solutions. Space must be clean, private and have an electrical outlet. Public restrooms or a toilet stall are NOT appropriate or compliant with the law.

**Promote a supportive environment**

A positive, accepting attitude from upper management, supervisors and coworkers will help a breastfeeding employee feel confident and be successful.

For breastfeeding support and resources:

- Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition: 1-844-COBFC-4U/www.cobfc.org
- Local WIC office: 1-800-688-7777
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: Breastfeeding in the Workplace resources www.breastfeedcolorado.com

*World Breastfeeding Month, August 2015*