

Make Breastfeeding YOUR Business

By supporting breastfeeding, we can create healthier people, healthier relationships and healthier communities.

Supporting breastfeeding will create healthier communities and will send a message that breastfeeding is valued, thus the health and future of our children and our community members matters.

How to deal with a concerned customer or employee?

When a customer or staff member expresses a concern, simply let them know that you are a family friendly business or organization, that you support breastfeeding and that it is a mother's right to breastfeed in public.

You can offer to serve a concerned customer in another location.

Where to get more information?

Make Breastfeeding Your Business: An Action Support Kit is available online:

http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/publications/breastfeeding_support_kit.pdf

Why is breastfeeding important?

Breastfeeding is important for the health of the baby and the mother, but also has benefits for employers and the community.

NOT breastfeeding increases the child's risk of asthma, respiratory infections, ear infections, obesity, and diabetes.

NOT breastfeeding increases the mother's risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, osteoporosis, and heart disease.

Breastfeeding is environmentally friendly (no waste), sustainable, & reduces food costs. Breastfed babies have fewer doctor visits, hospitalizations and prescriptions, thus lowering overall health care costs for the community.

When supported in the workplace, breastfeeding employees tend to be more satisfied with the balance of their lives, resulting in increased job satisfaction and greater productivity. It may also result in fewer missed days from work to tend to a sick child.

Support is a key factor that may influence a mother's decision to breastfeed.

How do we create supportive environments?

It can be as simple as smiling and making eye contact with a mother who is breastfeeding. Although women have the right to breastfeed "anywhere/ anytime", some mothers prefer a more private space to feed their babies. Offering a mother a spot to breastfeed her child will allow her to decide where she is most comfortable, for example "You are more than welcome to feed your baby here; however, if you would like a more private space, just let us know".

For mothers returning to work, developing a plan that is workable for both the mother and the employer can be a "win-win" situation. It can have a positive influence as to whether and when she returns to her job. Research shows that supporting employees who are breastfeeding can enhance productivity, satisfaction, loyalty and morale. It can improve the business image among employees, clients and the community, lower absenteeism, enhance retention and be a recruitment incentive. The *Make Breastfeeding Your Business: An Action Support Kit* includes suggestions as to how to develop such a plan.



A Checklist for Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly

- Review the “Make Breastfeeding Your Business” information we have provided.**

- Create a breastfeeding policy**
 - Discuss with your staff the importance of their support in creating a Breastfeeding Friendly environment for clients and co-workers.
 - Ensure new employees learn about the breastfeeding policy during orientation.
 - In addition to your breastfeeding policy, ensure all staff are aware that breastfeeding is a protected human right and women in Nova Scotia have the right to breastfeed everywhere.

- Display the International Breastfeeding Symbol** 
 - Once managers and staff have learned how to support breastfeeding, display the international breastfeeding symbol and/or post a sign that shows everyone that breastfeeding is welcome.

- Ensure all pregnant employees are aware of available breastfeeding supports they will receive upon returning to work.**
 - Meet with pregnant employees before their maternity leave.

- If possible, provide a place for parents to change diapers.**

- If possible, provide a space for women, who choose, to feed their babies in private or to pump.**



Staff tips for Supporting Breastfeeding In Public

Promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding.

Respecting the decision each mother makes about how to feed her baby.

It is recommended by Health Canada that babies be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of their lives. Breastfeeding is encouraged to continue after solid foods are introduced up to and beyond 2 years of age.

Importance of Breastfeeding:

- Decreases baby's risk of asthma, diarrhea, lung and ear infections, diabetes, and obesity.
- Decreases mother's risk of breast and ovarian cancers, osteoporosis, heart disease, and bleeding after birth.
- Less preparation time and lower cost.
- Decreases parents' missed work time due to sick children.
- Protects the environment (no waste).
- Creates healthier families, healthier communities & lower healthcare costs.

The following are some ways that you can make a mother who is breastfeeding feel more comfortable:

- Ask a woman with a baby where she would like to sit. Allow her to pick a spot where she will be comfortable breastfeeding, if she chooses.
- Talk to her in a comfortable manner. Ask about her baby.
- Making eye contact with a mother who is breastfeeding shows her that you are comfortable and that you support her.

If a customer expresses a concern about a woman breastfeeding in public:

- Explain that you are a family friendly establishment and it is your policy to support breastfeeding.
- Explain that the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act and Breastfeeding Policy protect a woman's right to breastfeed in public.
- Offer to move the concerned customer to another seat instead of offering another seat to the breastfeeding mother. This supports the fact that breastfeeding her baby is a right.

Where can you learn more about breastfeeding?

- Breastfeeding Nova Scotia www.first6weeks.ca: *not only will you find information about breastfeeding but you will also be able to search for breastfeeding supporters & support groups in your own community!*
- Nova Scotia Health and Wellness www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/cdip/healthy-eating-breastfeeding.asp
- La Leche League Canada www.lllc.ca



Helping Managers Support Employees Who Are Breastfeeding Their Babies

Combining Breastfeeding and Work

Promoting, protecting, and supporting breastfeeding.

Respecting the decision each mother makes about how to feed her baby.

Before leaving for maternity leave...

- Before having her baby, your employee should be made aware of the support she will have to breastfeed her child when she returns to work. This could greatly influence her decision to breastfeed and/or return to work. The handout *Making Breastfeeding Work...At Work!* will be made available to her prior to her leaving work to have her baby. This gives suggestions to make the transition from home to work easier for the breastfeeding mother and her employer.

Before returning to work...

- Closer to the date she will be returning to work, a plan can be made to incorporate breastfeeding into her workday. This plan will be specific to the mother, the baby, and the job. This plan may also change as a result of factors such as increased needs of the baby. For example, babies experience predictable growth spurts during which their breastmilk needs will be greater. When this occurs, more frequent breastfeeding or pumping will be necessary for 2-3 days.
- The keys to a successful plan include:
 - **Space** - Often a small, clean area with a comfortable chair is all that is needed. If your employee is pumping her breastmilk, an electrical outlet may be necessary. Electric pumps are the most efficient way to express milk and a mother may decide to use one to pump at work. A refrigerator should be accessible to store the breastmilk until the employee finishes her workday. If a refrigerator is not possible, a cooler with ice packs can be used.
 - **Time** - In most cases, breastfeeding or pumping can be incorporated into regular breaks throughout the work day. The time required, will vary according to the mother and baby.
 - **Support** - Sit down and talk to your employee before she returns to work. This will allow the opportunity to develop a plan that is workable for everyone involved and can result in a win-win situation. Information should be made available to other employees so they can effectively support their breastfeeding co-worker. See handout *Supporting a Colleague Who is Breastfeeding Her Baby*.

As the Employer...

- It is important for you to provide an open line of communication. It may be difficult for your employee to ask you for what she needs, and it may be difficult for you to know what she needs. Effective communication is required for the transition of combining breastfeeding and employment to be successful. This can be achieved by:
 - Ask your employee what she needs to make this transition easier. Ensure her of your support.
 - Make your business/organizational support of breastfeeding common knowledge among all employees. Some women may feel their co-workers will resent them as, allowing women to breastfeed or pump breastmilk during business hours may be perceived as special treatment by other employees who are not breastfeeding.
 - Active implementation of policies and procedures can raise awareness to other employees and make the breastfeeding employee more comfortable.
 - Show your support to non-breastfeeding employees and their families. Provide a bulletin board for employees to post pictures and/or accomplishments of their own family members or include them in a departmental newsletter.
 - Consult the necessary resources for help. *Make Breastfeeding Your Business: An Action Support Kit* (Frittenburg, S, 2009) is available online at http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/publications/breastfeeding_support_kit.pdf.

Making Breastfeeding Work...At Work!

Promoting, protecting, and supporting breastfeeding.

Respecting the decision each mother makes about how to feed her baby.

Before leaving on your maternity leave...

- Meet with your supervisor/manager to discuss your plan to continue breastfeeding when you return to work. Begin to explore possible options.

Before returning to work...

- Meet with your supervisor/manager to develop a plan to continue breastfeeding. Let him/her know what you will need and what he/she can do to help you.
- Discuss the possibility of starting back to work part way through a regular work week so that your first week is short. Another possibility is returning part-time and gradually increasing to full-time. Working from home for part of the day may be another possibility to ease back into work, while incorporating breastfeeding into the workday.
- You may want to get your baby used to drinking from a bottle or a cup so your baby can be fed pumped breastmilk, while you are at work.
- Learn about expressing and storing breastmilk. Find the method of expression that works best for you. For more information, call local community supports or refer to *Breastfeeding Basics*, a free Public Health resource.
- Begin storing your breastmilk about 2 weeks prior to returning to work to ensure that your baby has enough.
- Check your wardrobe. Two-piece outfits are a more practical choice when breastfeeding or expressing milk at work. Patterned tops can hide leakage and/or the contour of a nursing pad. It may be useful to keep a sweater at work, just in case.
- Perform a "test run" workday. Arrange for the baby to be left with a caregiver for a typical workday. Breastfeed and/or pump as you would during a workday. As a result, any kinks can be worked out.

When you are back to work...

- Stay organized. This can decrease the stress associated with returning to work and maximize your success with continuing to provide your baby with breastmilk.
- Give yourself time in the morning to breastfeed at least once and breastfeed right after you return from work.
- At work, pump or breastfeed as often as you would if you were at home with your child. When at home, breastfeed as often as you can. This will help you maintain your milk supply.
- Don't sweat the small stuff. Decide what is important and accept help from family and friends.
- Eat and drink well and get enough rest.
- Talk to other women who have combined work and breastfeeding. Provide feedback to your supervisor or manager about your progress.

Be proud of yourself and celebrate your accomplishments!



Breastfeeding Policy

Having a breastfeeding policy is an effective way to ensure that all staff are aware that the organization supports breastfeeding.

_____ **recognizes:**
(Name of business or organization)

- that breastfeeding is a protected human right and women in Nova Scotia have the right to breastfeed everywhere,
- that breastmilk is the optimal food for healthy growth and development of infants,
- that breastfeeding benefits infant and maternal health,
- and that breastfeeding contributes to the overall health of our community.

We promote and support breastfeeding and the expression of breastmilk:

- by managers, staff, clients and volunteers, as well as
- by accompanying friends and family members.

Management and staff of are committed to:

- educating new managers, staff and volunteers about this policy
- and working with breastfeeding managers and staff to determine mutually agreeable hours of work, assignments and breaks, which support breastfeeding practices and are compatible with the collective agreement and other policies and contracts.

Print Name

Title

Signature

Date