

The **BUSINESS CASE** for **BREASTFEEDING**

County of Ventura's Lactation Accommodation Policy

EMPLOYEES' GUIDE TO BREASTFEEDING AND WORKING



Presented by the Work/Life Program
Human Resources, County Executive Office
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BREASTFEEDING **WORKS** FOR WORKING WOMEN! HERE'S HOW...

*Breastfeeding has given me a wonderful bond experience with my baby.
I know he's getting a positive outcome, he looks big and healthy!*

County of Ventura employee



Congratulations for making the healthy choice to breastfeed your baby! Mothers everywhere have found that they can continue to give their babies important health benefits even after they return to work. This booklet will help you take those first steps back to your working life.

Where to find breastfeeding help and support

- Your health care provider
- The Breastfeeding Coalition of Ventura County
www.breastfeedventura.org (click on Resource Directory for a listing of Lactation consultants and more)
- WIC Program (Women, Infants & Children) 9 sites in Ventura County, 805/981-5251
- La Leche League, www.llli.org, Ventura County, 805/665-3018
- Mothers Guild, www.mothersguild.net, 805/667-2115
- The Pump Station & Nurture, www.pumpstation.com, 805/777-7179
- The Nan Tolbert Nurturing Center, www.birthresource.org, 805/646-7559
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)/Office on Women's Health
1-800-994-WOMAN(9662) or www.womenshealth.gov
- Working and Pumping - www.workandpump.com

GETTING STARTED WITH BREASTFEEDING

During Pregnancy

- Pregnancy is the best time to prepare for breastfeeding and returning to work.
- Attend prenatal classes available at your hospital, WIC clinic or private physician clinic.
- Attend La Leche League meetings to learn more about breastfeeding after returning to work.
- Talk with your supervisor to discuss your plans to breastfeed your baby. Review the County of Ventura's Lactation Accommodation policy (see page 7) to better familiarize yourself with your rights to breastfeed after returning to work. Ask your supervisor about the lactation room that is available at your work site.
- You can also contact the **Work/Life Program** at: worklife@ventura.org for assistance with returning to work and continuing to breastfeed. The Work/Life Program can help you identify the lactation room at your work site and can discuss your pumping schedule with you.

During the First Weeks of Your Baby's Life

- Get a good start in the hospital by putting your baby to the breast within the first hour after birth, and at least 8-12 times every 24 hours. This will help you establish a good milk supply for when you return to work. Your first milk (colostrum) is packed with antibodies that help protect your baby from illness.
- Your milk is perfect for your baby's needs, even though it may seem you are not making much the first few days. Your baby's stomach is very small at first (only the size of a large marble!) and only holds 1-2 teaspoons, so your baby doesn't need much! Between days 2-5 your body will begin making larger volumes of milk. Keep hydrated by drinking lots of water!
- The first few weeks after childbirth are a learning time for you and your baby. Use these important weeks to rest and take care of yourself and your baby.
- Watch for signs that your baby is getting plenty of milk. By day 5, baby should have around four to six wet diapers and three to four yellow, seedy stools every 24 hours.
- Avoid using bottles or pacifiers for the first 3-4 weeks as this may decrease milk supply. A lactation consultant can help you know you are making plenty of milk, and provide information on other ways to comfort your baby.
- If you and your baby need to be apart, you can express your milk manually or with a breast pump to keep up your milk supply, and refrigerate or freeze your milk to give to your baby later.

During your Maternity Leave

- Take as many weeks off as you can. Ideally, at least 6 weeks helps you recover from childbirth and establish strong breastfeeding techniques. Twelve weeks is even better.
- Focus on your baby during this time and make time to rest 20-30 minutes every few hours. Housework can wait or be taken on by other family and friends.
- Practice expressing your milk by hand or with a quality breast pump, and freeze 1-2 ounces at a time to save for your baby after you return to work. This also helps you build a greater milk supply. Pick times of the day when you seem to have the most milk. For many women, this is early in the morning. Some women express milk during or after their baby nurses since the milk has already "let down" and flows easily.
- Be patient with yourself. It takes time for both you and your baby to adjust to your new lives together. Follow your baby's cues for when and how long to breastfeed, and enjoy this special time together!
- Help your baby adjust to taking breast milk from a bottle shortly before you return to work. Because babies are used to nursing with mom, they usually drink from a bottle when offered by someone else!
- Talk with your family and your child care provider about your progress, questions, and intent to continue breastfeeding, and let them know you are counting on their support and help.

BACK TO WORK

It's been great to have the designated lactation room as a resource. Without it, I would not have been able to sustain my baby on breast milk exclusively for almost seven months!

County of Ventura employee

Return to Work Gradually

Returning to work gradually gives you more time to adjust and helps your body make a good supply of milk. Talk with your supervisor about your options:

- Start back to work part-time for a brief period before working full-time.
- Work from home or combine working at home and at work.
- Go back to work on a Thursday or Friday or just before 1-2 days off, depending on your work week. This gives you and your baby a shorter period to adjust to being away from each other before you go back full-time.
- Take Wednesdays off for a few weeks for a mid-week break, and breastfeed on your baby's schedule to rebuild your milk supply.
- Consider using child care close to work so you can visit and breastfeed your baby, if feasible, based on your work schedule.
- When you arrive to pick up your baby from child care, take time to breastfeed first. This will give you both time to reconnect before traveling home and returning to other family responsibilities.



Get a Quality Breast Pump

A good quality electric breast pump may be your best strategy for efficiently removing milk during the workday. Contact your local La Leche League, WIC office or a lactation consultant to find where to buy or rent a good pump. When you return to work full time, you'll be pumping multiple times a day, five days a week. An electric breast pump is your fastest, most efficient choice. Most pumps also have double pumping capacity, a real time-saver, since you can pump both breasts at once.

Mid-size pumps are designed to imitate babies' two-part feeding pattern: fast, shallow, nursing followed by slower, deeper feeding. This not only makes pumping more efficient, but enhances your milk supply, a major plus. Mid-size pumps feature the most powerful motors available in personal pumps, secondary only to the heavy, expensive breast pumps found in hospitals, but these are more portable and affordable than hospital pumps. They typically include an unobtrusive carry bag or backpack, so you can tote your pump back and forth to work discreetly.

Identify a Private Place to Express Milk

Work with your supervisor or the WorkLife Program manager to determine a private, comfortable place to pump your breast milk at your job site. All County work sites will have a dedicated or designated space or room that is suitable for pumping. Restrooms are not an appropriate place for you to pump. You need a clean area with privacy and a source of electricity and ideally a table top to manage your pump and supplies.

When to Express Milk

Express milk for 10-15 minutes approximately 2-3 times during a typical 8-hour work period. Remember that in the first months of life babies need to breastfeed 8-12 times in a 24 hour period. So you need to express and store milk during those usual feeding times when you are away from your baby. This will maintain a sufficient amount of milk for your child care provider to feed your baby while you are at work. The number of times you need to express milk at work should be equal to the number of feedings your baby will need while you are away. As the baby gets older, the number of feeding times may decrease. When babies are around six months old and begin solid foods, they often need to feed less often.

Secrets to Getting the Milk to Flow

Pumping is easiest when the milk “lets down” through the milk ducts. Massage your breasts, and gently rub your nipples. Relax! As you breathe out, visualize the milk flowing down. Think about your baby! Bring a photo of your baby, or a favorite blanket or article of clothing that smells like your baby. Some mothers record their baby’s voice to help the milk start flowing.



Storing your Milk

It is important to store your breastmilk in a place that is sanitary and safe. Refrigerated or frozen milk can be stored in hard-sided plastic or glass containers with well-fitting tops, BPA Free containers and freezer milk bags. Disposable bottle liners are not recommended as the risk of contamination is greater.

Because your milk is full of antibodies that fight germs and bacteria, it can be safely stored and given to the baby later. Breast milk is food, so it is safe to keep in an employee refrigerator or a cooler with ice packs. Some of the dedicated County lactation rooms have a small refrigerator used primarily for storing breast milk.

If you work in a medical department, do not store milk in the same refrigerators where medical specimens are kept. Be sure to label the milk container with your name and the date you expressed the milk.

Refrigerated 32-39°F or below	Frozen (freezer with a door separate from the refrigerator) 0°F or below	Thawed (from frozen) and refrigerated 32-39°F or below
Use within 2 days	Use within 3 months	Use within 24 hours

Opinions differ as to the amount of time breast milk can be safely stored. The storage times listed above are consistent with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

GETTING SUPPORT FOR BREASTFEEDING

Nursing both of my sons after returning to work was very much a priority for me so to have a space such as the lactation room and the support of the staff really helped in my success.

County of Ventura employee

Approaching your Supervisor

Many supervisors in the County of Ventura are happy to provide the support you need, as long as they know what your needs are and how important it is for you to have their support. Take comfort in knowing that the County of Ventura, as an employer, does recognize how important it is for babies to be breastfed and has created a policy that ensures support and reasonable accommodations for you as a nursing mom/employee. Here are some facts and strategies to present to your supervisor:

- Breastfeeding is the healthiest choice for your baby, resulting in fewer illnesses, infections, and certain types of skin irritations (dermatitis). It also helps you recover from pregnancy, and may reduce your risk of breast cancer.
- Your supervisor may not know what you need to continue breastfeeding. Simply explain your basic needs for privacy and flexible breaks to express milk.
- Breastfeeding will benefit the County as an employer because:
 - ▶ Employees are less likely to miss work to take care of a sick baby because the baby is healthier. (This is true for moms and dads.)
 - ▶ Health care costs are lower since both baby and mother are healthier.
 - ▶ Employees who receive support for breastfeeding are happier and more productive.
- Explain that you are committed to keeping your designated pumping space clean and orderly, that you will store your milk properly and your break time will be used as efficiently as possible for pumping your milk.
- Be a team member. Be sensitive to the issues that are important to the County and show how supporting your efforts to breastfeed can help both of you accomplish your goals.

What you may hear	What you can do
“The other employees might complain if you take time to do this.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Encourage co-workers to learn about the benefits of breastfeeding to both mom and baby.■ Remind them that this is a temporary need for you and your baby, and that you will use your break time.
“We have no space for a lactation room.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Remind your supervisor that the County has a policy that requires reasonable accommodations for nursing employees.■ Mention that it is only a small, private space that is needed.

Remember, you can contact the WorkLife Program to assist you in identifying an appropriate space to pump your breast milk!!

Communicating with Co-Workers

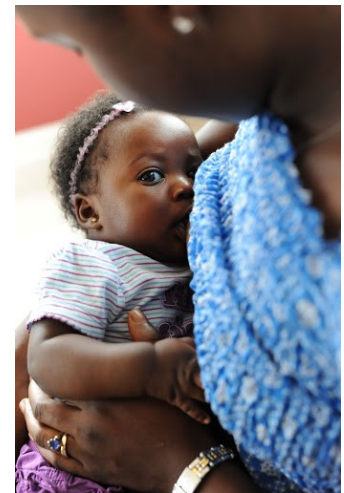
- Seek to understand co-worker concerns and work together to find solutions.
- Let co-workers know that breastfeeding is not only the healthiest choice for you and your baby, it also helps contain health care costs.
- If other workers do not understand the breaks you are taking to express milk, remind them you are using allowed breaks as indicated in the County's Lactation Accommodation Policy.

Find Other Breastfeeding Mothers

- Seek out other breastfeeding mothers online or in support groups to share experiences and tips. Some local groups that can offer you support are:
 - ▶ Ventura County Nursing Mamas can be found on Facebook
 - ▶ Mother's Guild is online at www.mothersguild.net
 - ▶ Or get involved in global change and advocacy at www.californiabreastfeeding.org or www.usbreastfeeding.org

Take Care of You!

You are providing an amazing gift to your child by breastfeeding so you need to be extra kind to yourself! It is imperative that you fuel your body with good nutrition several times throughout the day. Stay hydrated, drink lots of water. Get as much sleep as you can. Your body is working hard to keep you going AND to make milk for your baby. Give your body what it needs to accomplish this awesome task!



Feelings Associated with Weaning

Weaning is an emotional topic for everyone concerned - mom, baby, dad, and those closest to them. Some mothers feel very sad about the idea of weaning, while others may feel very strongly about wanting to wean. A mom may desire to wean yet feel uneasy about it. Once a mother has begun to encourage weaning, she may feel relieved, frustrated, or exhausted. Acknowledging these mixed feelings can help her know how to handle them.



Some moms may feel guilty about wanting to wean, especially if her child isn't ready or if they had earlier thought they would wait until the child weaned on his own. If your child is very attached to nursing, and you are longing to wean, it can feel as though there's no way to resolve the problem except to have one of you lose. Look instead for a "win-win" solution may help you feel more at peace. Take comfort in knowing that more family members can now participate in feeding your baby, resulting in more bonding opportunities with loved ones.

COUNTY OF VENTURA'S LACTATION ACCOMMODATION POLICY

The County of Ventura recognizes the many health, environmental, economic and social benefits that result from breastfeeding babies. The County is a breastfeeding friendly workplace that supports mothers/employees choice to breastfeed. The County strongly supports breastfeeding as a high priority for healthier babies by reasonably accommodating the lactation needs of employees on the job. This is accomplished by providing adequate facilities and break times for breastfeeding and/or expressing of milk. Further, all County employees will be provided training regarding awareness of the importance of breastfeeding in general, and on accommodating lactating mothers in the workplace.

- Employees who are nursing mothers will have access to an appropriate place to express their breast milk while on the job. At a minimum, a private, secure place, shielded from view and free from any intrusion from co-workers and the public, with access to electricity will be provided for the employee's use. If a shared space is selected, it must be available when needed and it must be functional as a space for expressing breast milk. A bathroom, even if private, is not a permissible location.
- Dedicated and designated lactation rooms are available throughout the County of Ventura worksites. For location of County lactation facilities, employees are to contact the WorkLife Program in the CEO-HR Benefits Division or visit the WorkLife Program web page.
- Nursing employees who frequently travel to other County sites or who are 'out in the field' due to their job responsibilities should work closely with their supervisor or the WorkLife Program to determine several alternative locations that they can pump breast milk while away from their home office location.
- The WorkLife Program is available to work with the employee and her supervisor to schedule the use of the lactation room in her facility. It is recognized by the County as an employer that regular break times may not be sufficient in accommodating the nursing mother, especially if the designated lactation space is not in close proximity to her work space. All breastfeeding employees will be provided two to three breaks along with the lunch period to express milk or to breastfeed their infant on the job. A reasonable amount of time will be provided to the employee. The WorkLife Program can be available to assist with establishing a schedule.
- Managers and supervisors shall respond to any request for lactation accommodation in a manner consistent with the procedures outlined in the is policy. Each department shall create an atmosphere of tolerance regarding lactation in the workplace. Breastfeeding shall not be a source of discrimination in employment or in access to employment. It is prohibited under this policy to harass a lactating employee or exercise any conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. Any incident of harassment of a lactating employee will be addressed in accordance with Ventura County policies and procedures for discrimination and harassment.
- For the full version of the County of Ventura's Lactation Accommodation Policy please go to the WorkLife Program webpage: <http://www.ventura.org/benefits/work/life-program>