

# BREASTFEEDING & WORK

## WHY SHOULD EMPLOYERS CARE?

### STAFF HAVE LESS TIME OFF WORK

Breastfed babies get sick less often so mothers take less time off work. One-day absences to care for sick children occur more than twice as often for mothers of formula feed infants.

### INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

Parents of breastfed babies miss fewer work days, worry less and concentrate more on their work because their babies are healthier.

### LOWER STAFF TURNOVER

Recruiting and training new employees is costly. Breastfeeding programmes can reduce turnover rates. A US study of several companies showed 94.2 % retention in companies with a workplace breastfeeding programme compared with the national average of 59%.

### SIGNIFICANT RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Workplace breastfeeding programmes can have a \$3:1 return on investment.

### POSITIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

Breastfeeding programmes can help organisations build goodwill in the community and give them a competitive advantage when recruiting and retaining employees.

Sources of information for flyer:

<sup>1</sup> *The Business Case for Breastfeeding*. Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Slavitt W, editor. *Investing in Workplace Breastfeeding Programs and Policies: An Employer's Toolkit*. Washington, DC: Center for Prevention and Health Services, National Business Group on Health; 2009.

## NOTES FOR EMPLOYERS

World Breastfeeding

Week 2015

*Theme: Breastfeeding  
& Work. Lets Make it  
Work!*



Otago Breastfeeding  
Network

*For more information:  
SDHB -03 476 98918  
The Breast Room  
-027 476 1339  
WellSouth – 03 477 1163*

# BREASTFEEDING AT WORK

## WHAT SHOULD EMPLOYERS PROVIDE?

### Communication

Nearly all breastfeeding employees report that what they value most is organisation support, including verbal and written support, from supervisors, colleagues and other breastfeeding employees.

Supervisors should discuss feeding arrangements with breastfeeding employees before they return to work.

### Private Place For Milk Expression Or Breastfeeding

A breastfeeding employee needs a place where she can safely breastfeed or express milk. This can be a woman's private office or a room identified for breastfeeding. (Simple breastfeeding rooms can be created out of little-used areas in a building e.g. an alcove or storage area.) Basic requirements for the room include a door that locks from the inside, a comfortable chair and a table and a power point for a breast pump if needed.

### Time To Express Milk Or Breastfeed

At work women require time during the day to either breastfeed their babies or express breastmilk.

- Women typically require two or three sessions a day of about 30 minutes each
- As the baby begins eating solid foods around 6 months, sessions often become less frequent
- After the baby reaches 12-15 months, most women no longer need special breaks

### Place to Store Breastmilk

Because of its unique antibacterial properties, breast milk can be safely stored at room temperature for 4 hours. It can also be stored in a personal cooler, a refrigerator or a freezer.

Employers should respect the needs of all employees:

- Most women prefer keeping their milk in a safer, more private place than a public shared refrigerator.
- Occasionally colleagues may not be comfortable with milk being stored in a shared refrigerator.

### Education

Breastfeeding information helps:

- Employees and their partners make informed choices about infant feeding
- Managers, supervisors and colleagues understand and be sensitive to breastfeeding employees' needs and challenges and the value to the breastfeeding programme to the organisation

A variety of educational options can be offered e.g. on-line resources, DVDs, pamphlets.

Sources of information for flyer:

<sup>1</sup> *The Business Case for Breastfeeding*. Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Slavitt W, editor. *Investing in Workplace Breastfeeding Programs and Policies: An Employer's Toolkit*. Washington, DC: Center for Prevention and Health Services, National Business Group on Health; 2009.