

How to Talk To Others About Breastfeeding

Talking About Breastfeeding



Continuing to breastfeed when you return to work is a great decision because breastfeeding is good for your health and your baby's. Federal law now also requires employers to provide reasonable break time and a private place where nonexempt, hourly employees can pump milk at work.

Your employer and your doctor support your choice to breastfeed, because breastfeeding is good for the health of both mothers and babies, and can save money for both families and employers.

Combining nursing and working, however, is still a new idea for many people. You may find that people at work and elsewhere ask questions about why and how you manage to nurse your baby while working outside your home. Here are a few ways in which you can help them understand and support your decision.

When someone at work or at home asks:

Why is it so important that you breastfeed?

Answer:

By breastfeeding my baby, I am doing the best for my baby, myself and my employer. Mothers of breastfed babies often miss work less because their babies are sick less. When employees and their families are healthy, their employers have lower medical costs. And now, workplace support for nursing mothers is required by federal law.

Breastfeeding can protect infants from acute illness and infection.

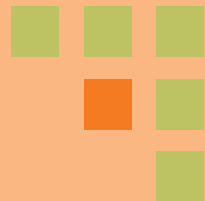
When someone asks:

How much time off do you need to pump?

Answer:

The same amount of time every employee takes for breaks, about twenty minutes every three hours. Federal law requires employers to let nonexempt nursing mothers take the breaks they need to pump milk for a year after their babies are born.





When someone asks:

Why can't you use the women's restroom to pump?

Answer:

Because I am preparing food for my baby, and require a sanitary place in which to do so. Federal law also requires employers to provide a place for nursing mothers to pump that is not a bathroom.

When someone asks:

For how long will you need to pump your milk three times a day?

Answer:

Until my baby is older. She is two months old now, so in a few months when she starts eating other foods, I will probably pump less.

When someone asks:

How can we set up a schedule for employees who pump without lowering productivity?

Answer:

Those of us using the Privacy Room or lactation space can set up a schedule that lets each person pump when she needs to pump. If we know when the space is free, we can focus on our work until it's our turn to use the space. Also, pumping schedules will change as babies grow. We can communicate with each other directly when we need to adjust our schedules. Perhaps if one employee were designated as a "floater" responsible for stepping in for 15 to 20 minutes whenever another employee needs to pump, we can ensure that pumping breaks do not reduce productivity.

When someone asks:

What does a lactation space need?

Answer:

A small table and a chair with a straight back. It needs to be private, not a restroom—either a small room with a door that locks or a section of a room with a high divider. It should have an electrical plug or an extension cord that can reach a plug somewhere else. It should have or be near a sink with running water.

Remember: Confidence in your decision and knowledge about the benefits of breastfeeding—and your legal right to pump at work—will change minds and encourage others to follow your lead!