

MSU Guidelines for Supporting Breastfeeding Employees

In recognition of the well-documented health advantages of breastfeeding for infants and mothers, and in compliance with provisions of the Affordable Care Act, MSU provides a supportive environment to enable breastfeeding parents to express their milk during work hours. The following work/education support guidelines are to be communicated across campus to all current employees, and should also be included in employee orientations.

University Responsibilities

Applies to all MSU employees

Breastfeeding employees who choose to continue providing breast milk for their infants after returning to work may receive:

- **Milk Expression Breaks**

Breastfeeding employees are allowed to breastfeed or express milk during work hours using their normal breaks and meal times. For time that may be needed beyond the usual break times, employees may make up the time as negotiated with their supervisors with a flexible work schedule, or may use personal or vacation leave.

- **A Place to Express Milk**

To find spaces on campus, use this link: Breastfeeding Room Location [Map](#)

A private room (not a toilet stall or restroom) shall be available for employees to breastfeed or express milk. The room will be private and sanitary, located near a sink with running water for washing hands and rinsing out breast pump equipment, and have an electrical outlet. If employees prefer, they may also breastfeed or express milk in their own private offices, or in other comfortable locations agreed upon in consultation with the employee's supervisor. The minimum room recommendations are as follows: 4'x 5' private space (Business Case for Breastfeeding, 2017), locked door, comfortable chair, electrical outlet, access to a sink, adequate lighting, and ventilation.

- **Breastfeeding Equipment**

MSU does not provide equipment. Employees/nursing mothers are responsible for their own equipment. Consult your health insurance policy for pump coverage.

- **Staff Support**

Once informed, supervisors shall support and make information available to pregnant and breastfeeding employees about the university's worksite lactation support program, and for discussing practices that will help facilitate each employee's infant feeding goals. It is expected that all employees will assist in providing a positive atmosphere of support for breastfeeding employees.

Employee Responsibilities

Communication with Supervisors

Employees who wish to express milk during the work period should keep supervisors informed of their needs to leave at other than break times so that appropriate accommodations can be made to satisfy the needs of both the employee and the university. Ideally the conversation should occur and arrangements should be made prior to the employee's parental leave.

Maintenance of Milk Expression Area

While custodial staff are responsible for cleaning and maintaining space according to set guidelines, breastfeeding employees are also expected to help keep milk expression areas clean after use. This responsibility extends to both the designated milk expression area, as well as the other areas where expressing milk will occur.

Milk Storage

Employees should label all milk expressed with their name and date collected. Expressed milk can be stored in departmental refrigerators if available. Each employee is responsible for proper storage of their milk using the departmental refrigerator and/or personal storage coolers.

Room Access

Employees may need to request keys or room access from the designated building contact person when locked. When more than one breastfeeding employee needs to use the designated lactation room, employees can use a sign-up sheet/calendar provided by the room contact person to schedule and arrange for milk expression times.

Benefits of Breastfeeding and Workplace Return on Investment

Reduced absenteeism, reduced health care costs, increased retention, higher productivity and loyalty, and positive impacts on climate as a family-friendly workplace are among the business benefits of lactation support. Babies are healthier and mothers miss work less often.

- Breastfeeding lowers health care costs because breastfed babies visit the physician less often (US Department of Health and Human Services study found for every 1,000 babies not breastfed there were 2,033 extra physician visits, 212 extra hospitalization days and 609 prescriptions for three illnesses: ear, respiratory and gastrointestinal infections).
- Breastfeeding mothers heal more quickly and suffer less postpartum depression.

- The Michigan Breastfeeding Network indicated a retention rate of 92% of the maternity workforce in companies with lactation support programs compared to a national average of 59% (2015).

Support

MSU is an award-winning supporter of nursing mothers, and the WorkLife Office provides a university-wide lactation support program.

- **Education**

Prenatal and postpartum breastfeeding classes and informational materials are available for mothers, fathers, expectant parents, and partners. These Breastfeeding Education Series classes are sponsored by the WorkLife Office and are held during the fall and spring semesters as opportunities for parents to receive free information and peer support.

References

Business Case for Breastfeeding. (2017, May 03). Retrieved from

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-home-work-and-public/breastfeeding-and-going-back-work/business-case#employeesGuide>