



# Quick Tips for Managers: Support Employees who Breastfeed

It's World Breastfeeding Week! While OHSU provides excellent resources to our patients who breastfeed, it is equally important as a manager and/or leader to provide support for employees who breastfeed and/or express breastmilk at work.

### Save money and resources

[Data from the US Department of Health & Human Services](#) shows that **supporting breastfeeding employees saves money – Here's how:**

- **Employees who breastfeed miss work less often:** Human milk boosts an infant's immune system and helps protect him from common childhood illnesses, infections, and dermatitis. For infants in childcare settings where they are exposed to a multitude of germs and viruses, human milk provides even greater protection. Mothers and fathers of breastfed infants typically spend more time at work rather than taking leave to care for sick children.
- **Breastfeeding lowers health care costs:** Babies who are not breastfed visit the physician more often, spend more days in the hospital, and require more prescriptions than breastfed infants.
- **Higher Productivity and Loyalty:** Employees whose companies provide breastfeeding support consistently report improved morale, better satisfaction with their jobs, and higher productivity. They also feel the support eases their transition back to work and enables them to return from maternity leave sooner.

### Quick Tips: What can you do?

Here are a few quick tips to navigating the return of a new parent-employee who wishes to continue providing breast milk for their baby:

- Collaborate in developing a plan **before the new parent returns** to work that balances supporting the parent's needs with minimizing disruption to the workplace. Discussing this early minimizing concerns for both parties and sets everyone up for success starting their very first day of their return.
- You must provide reasonable break time to an employee each time they have the need to breastfeed or express milk.
- It is okay to request that the employee use their regular meal and break periods; however, if the employee needs break time beyond those normally scheduled, those need to be accommodated. Additional accommodations are included in the ONA contract – [learn more here](#) (see MOU #3)
- For hourly employees, time spent breastfeeding or expressing milk is unpaid (unless done during normally paid break times). You may allow the employee to make up any unpaid time either before or after their scheduled shift, if operations allow. The employee may also choose to use accrued vacation or comp time.

- The employee must have access to a clean, private and comfortable area that is in close proximity to their work area. If the area is not dedicated to the purpose of breastfeeding or expressing milk, it must be made available when needed for that purpose. A private office is an acceptable location under the policy; a bathroom is not. Direct them to designated spaces listed on the [Breastfeeding in the Workplace O2](#) site.
- The employee must have access to a refrigerator or location to place a cooler to store expressed breast milk.
- **Encourage your staff to support breastfeeding in the workplace by visiting a pop-up information table this week, or by attending the Big Latch On! on Friday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> from 9:30-12 noon, on the MacKenzie Hall Lawn (by the fountain)**

### [Learn more](#)

Find out more information on the [Breastfeeding in the Workplace O2](#), contact [WEBMAC@ohsu.edu](mailto:WEBMAC@ohsu.edu), or your [HR Business Partner](#).