

## Talking to Your Supervisor about Lactation Needs

Congratulations on your decision to breastfeed! As you know, it is beneficial for you and your baby's health and increases employee productivity and employer cost savings. Whenever possible, we recommend that you talk to your supervisor before you go on maternity leave about your intention to breastfeed your baby and pump breast milk while at work. This provides your supervisor with time to identify an appropriate location to pump that will work for you, and to think with you about how to best incorporate time for pumping into your work day. Sharing the following information will also help your supervisor ensure that they are complying with Minnesota statutes, federal law and University of Minnesota guidelines, while answering some common questions about the needs of lactating mothers.

### Addressing the Need for Breaks to Pump

- Minnesota State Statute<sup>1</sup> and federal law<sup>2</sup> require that an employer make an effort to arrange for a private location, other than a bathroom stall, where an employee can express breast milk and provide break time to do so.
- The University of Minnesota strives to foster a workplace that helps all employees manage both their work obligations and their personal responsibilities, such as providing breast milk for an infant. Ultimately, this approach benefits all employees.<sup>3</sup>

### Identifying an Appropriate Location to Pump

- **Private and secure.** The room needs to provide some privacy (prefer lockable), an outlet to provide power to the pump, a small table, and a chair. Ideally, a lactation room has a sink nearby to rinse pumping equipment.
- **Near your work location.** This will allow you to return to work promptly after pumping. Find information about [University lactation rooms](#).
- **Sanitary.** A bathroom stall is **not** an appropriate place to pump, and is **not** acceptable by statute. A bathroom is unsanitary, which increases the risk of illness in your infant and may cause you to be absent from work more often.

### Pumping and Completing Your Work

- A woman with a newborn infant who is returning to work will typically be able to maintain a good milk supply by pumping for approximately 15-20 minutes, three times, during a regular eight-hour day. Depending on the location of the pumping room, you may need to add travel time to the estimated break time. With a little bit of planning, work environments are able to accommodate three short breaks a day for an employee. As the infant gets older, a woman may need pump less frequently.
- Breastfed infants often contract fewer infections that would require their parents to miss work to care for them.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Minnesota State Statute regarding accommodations for pumping at work  
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=181.939>

<sup>2</sup> The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Sec 4207, Public Law 111-148, requires an employer to provide "a reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for 1 year after the child's birth each time such employee has need to express the milk". In addition, the employer should provide, "a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk." <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ148/pdf/PLAW-111publ148.pdf>, last retrieved, February 22, 2013

<sup>3</sup> University of Minnesota Board of Regents Policy regarding Employee Work-Life and Personal Leaves,  
[http://www.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/Employee\\_WorkLife.pdf](http://www.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/Employee_WorkLife.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding, 2011  
<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/breastfeeding/calltoactiontosupportbreastfeeding.pdf>

Additional information regarding how the workplace can benefit from supporting breastfeeding mothers:  
<http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/government-programs/business-case-for-breastfeeding/business-case-breastfeeding.cfm>

Suggestions? Contact the Women's Center at 612-625-9837