

The
Importance
Of
Breastfeeding

Why is breastfeeding important?

- ✓ Breastfeeding is important for the health of the baby and the mother, but also has benefits for employers and the community.
- ✓ NOT breastfeeding increases the child's risk of: asthma, respiratory infections, ear infections, obesity, and diabetes.
- ✓ NOT breastfeeding increases the mother's risk of: breast cancer, ovarian cancer, osteoporosis, and heart disease.
- ✓ Breastfeeding is environmentally friendly (no waste), sustainable, & reduces food costs.
- ✓ Breastfed babies have fewer doctor visits, hospitalizations and prescriptions, thus lowering overall health care costs for the community.
- ✓ When supported in the workplace, breastfeeding employees tend to be more satisfied with the balance of their lives, resulting in increased job satisfaction and greater productivity. It may also result in fewer missed days from work to tend to a sick child.

How do we create supportive environments?

It can be as simple as smiling and making eye contact with a mother who is breastfeeding. Although women have the right to breastfeed "anywhere/anytime", some mothers prefer a more private space to feed their babies. Offering a mother a spot to breastfeed her child will allow her to decide where she is most comfortable, for example "You are more than welcome to feed your baby here; however, if you would like a more private space, just let us know".

For mothers returning to work, developing a plan that is workable for both the mother and the employer can be a "win-win" situation. It can have a positive influence as to whether and when she returns to her job. Research shows that supporting employees who are breastfeeding can enhance productivity, satisfaction, loyalty and morale. It can improve the business image among employees, clients and the community, lower absenteeism, enhance retention and be a recruitment incentive.

The Make Breastfeeding Your Business:

An Action Support Kit includes suggestions as to how to develop such a plan.

