

# Breastfeeding and Working

## *The law is on your side*



### **Breastfeeding is good for you and your baby—even after you go back to work.**

Breast milk has important nutrients for your growing baby. It can protect your baby from health conditions such as colds, the flu, ear infections and even SIDS. It also can protect your baby from long-term health problems such as asthma, allergies, and obesity.

Health experts recommend feeding your baby only breast milk for the first six months of life, then breastfeeding in combination with solid foods for as long as you and your baby want to continue.

Mothers who breastfeed their babies have a lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes, breast cancer, and cervical cancer.

Breastfeeding can also reduce costs for families. Formula and bottle supplies can cost up to \$1,500 each year. Breastfeeding also helps with mother/baby bonding and may reduce the risk of depression after the baby is born.

**Working while you are breastfeeding usually means you will have to pump breast milk while you are at work. Fortunately, the law is on your side.**

### **What must your employer do?**

By law, your employer must provide the **time** and **space** for you to express, or pump, breast milk during the workday until your child is 18 months old.

#### **Time**



- Your employer must provide reasonable break times for you to express breast milk each time you need to. Most moms need to pump every 2-4 hours to maintain their milk supply.
- Pumping breaks may be combined with your regular, paid or unpaid breaks.
- Your employer must count the time you spend pumping for the purpose of determining your eligibility for health insurance.

#### **Space**



- Your pumping space needs to be:
  - Private (out of view)
  - Free from intrusion from coworkers and the public
  - Cannot be a toilet stall or restroom
- Spaces that work well are clean, have a chair, desk or table, good lighting, an electrical outlet, and a sink nearby.
- The location must be close to your work area. If it is not close by, and travel to and from the location shortens your break time, then your employer cannot include travel time as part of your break.
- If the space is not dedicated for use only by breastfeeding employees, it must be available when you need it. A space can be temporarily created, converted, or made available when needed.

## What if they don't follow the law?

The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) can fine employers, if they are not following the law. Oregon's Lactation Law says that there is a \$1,000 fine for employers for every time they don't follow the law and support their breastfeeding employees.

Employers with fewer than 50 employees in Oregon can ask BOLI to be exempted from this law because of undue hardship. Businesses are not automatically excused from the law because they are small, they must get special approval from BOLI.

## Who to contact



If your employer is **not** following the lactation laws, you can get help. Contact:

### **Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), Wage and Hour Section**

Phone/Teléfono: 971-673-0844

Email/Correo Electrónico:

whdscreener@boli.state.or.us

If you are being discriminated against in *any* way while at work, contact:

### **BOLI Civil Rights Division**

Phone: 971-673-0764

Teléfono: 971-673-2818

Email/Correo Electrónico:

crdemail@boli.state.or.us

## Find out more about the laws

Both Oregon and federal laws require employers to provide time and space for you to pump during the workday.

### **Learn about Oregon's law at:**

[public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyPeopleFamilies/Babies/Breastfeeding/Pages/Laws.aspx](http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyPeopleFamilies/Babies/Breastfeeding/Pages/Laws.aspx)

### **Learn about the federal law at:**

[dol.gov/whd/nursingmothers/](http://dol.gov/whd/nursingmothers/)

## Your other breastfeeding rights



Oregon law gives you the right to breastfeed in public spaces. If you are asked to stop, to leave, or to cover up, remember the law says you have a right to be able to feed your child.

## Find out more about breastfeeding and working

- [multco.us/children-and-family-health-services/breastfeeding-support](http://multco.us/children-and-family-health-services/breastfeeding-support)
- [usbreastfeeding.org](http://usbreastfeeding.org)

## Lactation Support

Lactation consultants are professionals who are trained to help mothers and babies with breastfeeding questions and difficulties. You can ask for help through your healthcare provider, your WIC office, or a private lactation consultant. If you have insurance, check with your insurance provider to see if this is a covered service for you.

