Providing support is a temporary need for each breastfeeding employee. When the following simple, cost-effective components are provided employees enjoy the biggest savings.

1. **Privacy to Express Milk**
   - If women do not work in a private office, a small, private space (as small as 4’ x 5’) can be set up for a lactation room. A woman produces milk on a constant basis (see page 6 of *Easy Steps to Supporting Breastfeeding Employees*). This means the need to express milk approximately 3 hours to maintain a healthy milk supply and relieve uncomfortable fullness when separated from her infant. Milk can be refrigerated or stored in a personal cooler to provide to the baby later. Many companies also provide a hospital grade electric breast pump that makes pumping quicker and more efficient (see *Easy Steps to Supporting Breastfeeding Employees* to learn more about accessing quality breast pumps).

Employees should never be asked to express milk or breastfeed in a restroom. Breast milk is food, and restrooms are an unsanitary place to prepare food. In addition, electrical outlets are usually unavailable and it is difficult and uncomfortable managing breast pump equipment in a toilet stall.

2. **Flexible Breaks**
   - Each milk expression session usually takes around 15 minutes plus time to get to and from the lactation room. Breastfeeding employees typically need no more than an hour per work day to express milk, which can easily be divided between usual paid breaks and the meal period. 12 if milk expression takes longer than expected, a common solution is to allow employees the flexibility to come in early or stay late, or to use a portion of their lunch period, to make up time.

3. **Education**
   - Employees value information they receive during their pregnancy about continuing to breastfeed their newborns. They need to know how to express milk, which can easily be divided between usual paid breaks and the meal period. 12 information can be presented in a number of ways, such as pamphlets, lunches, and prenatal classes, and access to a lactation consultant can help employees feel more prepared (see the Resource Guide section of the Tool Kit).

4. **Support**
   - Supportive policies and practices that enable women to successfully return to work and breastfeed are critical. Management can encourage supervisors to work with breastfeeding employees in making reasonable accommodations to help them reach their breastfeeding goals and can encourage other employees to exhibit a positive, accepting attitude.

Providing support is a temporary need for each breastfeeding employee. Once babies begin using solid foods at 6 months, milk expression requirements gradually diminish.

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**LACTATION SUPPORT**

**REQUIRES FEW RESOURCES**

Companies both large and small benefit from providing a lactation support program. When the following simple, cost-effective components are provided employees enjoy the biggest savings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large Businesses and Public Agencies (500 or more Employees)</th>
<th>Small Businesses (1-99 Employees)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Various departments and agencies of the Federal Government</td>
<td>- Andalus Health Center (Oregon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Boston University Medical Center</td>
<td>- HCG Software, LLC (Oregon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- California Niche Health Foundation Enterprises</td>
<td>- Childhood Health Associates of Salem (Oregon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- CIGNA</td>
<td>- Pecan Ridge School (Texas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Texas Instruments</td>
<td>- Western Environmental Law Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Home Depot</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Mid-Sized Businesses (100-499 Employees)**

- Pentair
- Sears Roebuck & Co. #3179

**Companies that Support Breastfeeding Employees**

Many companies provide designated space for breastfeeding employees to express milk and supportive policies to help them reach their breastfeeding goals. Some of these companies employ significant numbers of women and some do not. Examples of large, mid-sized, and small companies and public agencies with supportive lactation programs include:

1. **Fort Lewis and**
   - Madigan Army Medical Center
   - Medical of Omaha
   - Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
   - Peace Health Restaurant Service Center
   - Sea World

2. **Bilfinger**

**Mid-Sized Businesses (100-499 Employees)**

- Andalus Health Center (Oregon)
- HCG Software, LLC (Oregon)
- Childhood Health Associates of Salem (Oregon)
- Pecan Ridge School (Texas)
- Western Environmental Law Center

3. **Small Businesses (1-99 Employees)**

- Andalus Health Center (Oregon)
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- Childhood Health Associates of Salem (Oregon)
- Pecan Ridge School (Texas)
- Western Environmental Law Center

**References:**

Companies successful at retaining valued employees after childbirth find that two components can make the difference: providing dedicated space (as small as 4’ x 11’) for breastfeeding employees to express milk in privacy, and providing worksite lactation support. The proof is significant: more satisfied, loyal employees and cost savings to the business. These savings are seen in such areas as:

- Retention of experienced employees;
- Reduction in sick time taken by both moms and dads for children’s illnesses; and
- Lower health care and insurance costs.

This booklet provides business executives and managers, as well as human resource managers, with the business case for breastfeeding…how supporting breastfeeding employees contributes to their company’s return on investment (ROI).

**Companies that provide comprehensive onsite lactation support programs enjoy additional health care cost savings. That’s because these programs encourage employees to breastfeed longer and to breastfeed exclusively to 6 months (the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics) which provides the greatest health advantages for breastfeeding employees and their infants.**

**Adding employee-focused education to help improve birth outcomes, the savings are even greater.**

**Business Savings**
- Mutual of Omaha found that health care costs for newborns are three times lower for babies whose mothers participate in their company’s maternity and lactation program. Per person health care costs were $2,146 more for employees who did not participate in the program, with a yearly savings of $111,801 in health care claims for the breastfeeding mothers and babies.2

**Higher Productivity and Loyalty**
Employees whose companies provide breastfeeding support consistently report improved morale, better satisfaction with their jobs, and higher productivity.3 They also feel the support eases their transition back to work and enables them to return from maternity leave sooner.

**Positive Public Relations**
Providing a supportive environment for breastfeeding employees improves your overall company image and enhances your ability to recruit top-notch staff. Many companies with support programs receive local, state, and national recognition and media attention, a positive boost to recruitment efforts and general goodwill in the community.

**Profits and People**
Today, women with children are the fastest growing segment of the workforce. Nearly 45 percent of women with children under the age of 3 are employed.4 In the United States, more than 70 percent of all new mothers today choose to breastfeed to give their babies important nutrition and health benefits.5 Family-friendly policies and programs that provide lactation support for both female employees and partners of male employees enhance your employee health benefits package and help protect your company’s investment in staff through better retention of valued employees.6

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**The Business Case for Breastfeeding**

Companies successful at retaining valued employees after childbirth find that two components can make the difference: providing dedicated space (as small as 4’ x 11’) for breastfeeding employees to express milk in privacy, and providing worksite lactation support. The proof is significant: more satisfied, loyal employees and cost savings to the business. These savings are seen in such areas as:

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**Business Savings**
- The insurance company CGNIA conducted a 2-year study of 343 employees who participated in their lactation support program, and found that the program resulted in an annual savings of $240,000 in health care expenses, 62 percent fewer prescriptions, and $60,000 savings in reduced absenteeism rates.7

**Investing in a worksite lactation support program can yield substantial dividends to the company.**

Companies of all types have found that implementing a lactation support program can have a positive impact on their bottom line. Just a few of these important dividends include lower turnover rates, additional health care savings, higher productivity and loyalty, and positive public relations.

**Lower Turnover Rates**
Employers are more likely to return to work after childbirth when their workplace provides a supportive environment for continued breastfeeding. Being able to keep experienced employees after childbirth means lowering or eliminating the costs a company otherwise would incur to hire temporary staff to recruit, hire, and train replacement staff, both of which involve additional lost revenue while getting these new staff up to speed.

**Business Savings**
- Mutual of Omaha lactation support program led to a retention rate of 83 percent of their maternity workforce compared to the national average of only 59 percent.8
- Another study of several companies with lactation programs showed a retention rate of 94.2 percent.9
- A New Zealand study estimated $75,000 in savings for each employee who returns to work after maternity leave.10

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