

Workplace Accommodation of Lactating Employees



- Over half of Utah mothers with young children work outside the home¹. In a 2000 survey, 27% of Utah moms reported returning to work or school as the reason they quit breastfeeding.
- Breastfeeding reduces health risks and health care costs.
 Medical evidence shows that breastfeeding lowers the baby's risk of infections, diarrhea, SIDS, obesity, diabetes, asthma, and childhood leukemia, and lowers the mother's risk of breast and ovarian cancers and diabetes.

 \$475 is lost per non-breastfed infant for extra health care costs during the first year of life, to treat just three common diseases.
- Exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months is recommended by an Expert Committee of 15 professional organizations (convened by the AMA, HRSA, and CDC) as a strategy for preventing child and adolescent obesity.² Breastfeeding is associated with a 15-30% reduced odds of pediatric overweight³ and may also reduce the risk of overweight or obesity in adulthood by 7% to 24%. One study found a 4% reduction in the risk of being overweight in adulthood for each additional month of breastfeeding in infancy⁴.
- Working lactating mothers need reasonable accommodations including a clean, private location and break time (paid or unpaid) to express milk.
- Utah mothers want to breastfeed their infants. In 2005, 93% of Utah mothers initiated breastfeeding, but only 19% of infants were exclusively breastfed at 6 months of age.
- Employers and employees benefit when they implement lactation support programs.
 Businesses who support lactating employees experience significant cost savings (\$3 for every \$1 invested) resulting from:
 - Lower health care and insurance costs
 - Lower absenteeism rates, and
 - Lower turnover rates.
 Businesses also benefit from higher employee productivity and morale and positive public relations in the community as a "family friendly" business.

Breastfeeding duration and exclusivity are evidence-based target areas identified by CDC for state plans to reduce the burden of obesity. This is included in the Utah Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan 2010-2020 (in final stages).

Worksite Goal 4: Increase promotion and support in the workplace for breastfeeding employees.

Strategy 4.6: Support upcoming state legislation on Workplace Accommodations for Lactating Employees.

¹Utah Department of Workforce Services. The Facts About Women in Utah. Retrieved on November 12, 2009, from <http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/wi/pubs/womencareers/thefacts.htm>

²Barlow S and the Expert Committee. Expert committee recommendations regarding the prevention, assessment, and treatment of child and adolescent overweight and obesity: summary report. *Pediatrics*. 2007; 120:S164-S192.

³http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/breastfeeding_r2p.pdf

⁴Arenz S, Ruckerl R, Koletzko, B, von Kries R. Breastfeeding and childhood obesity: A systematic review. *Int J Obes Relat Metal Disord*. 2004; 28: 1247-1256.