

Making it Work: Using New National Tools to Help Employers Support Nursing Moms

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Session Description:

There has to be an easier way! Many women returning to work after maternity leave find that the challenges are great, and often breastfeeding is seen as the key to making life easier. At the same time, employers of these women are often even *less* likely to know how to support them, even though creative solutions abound. This presentation briefly examines the realities and solution for combining breastfeeding and employment, and new national tools being launched by the HHS Office on Women's Health to help employers support nursing moms.

Objectives:

1. Name three major barriers to breastfeeding among women returning to work.
2. Identify practical solutions for helping mothers continue breastfeeding after returning to work.
3. Identify new resources from the HHS Office on Women's Health, and recommendations for implementing them in local communities.

Common Barriers

- Short maternity leave
- Emotional and physical needs of mothers
- Work settings that are often not conducive to breastfeeding or milk expression
- Lack of family support
- Lack of knowledge about rights to time and space for expressing milk at work
- Additional challenges face low-income women working in low-wage jobs:
 - Job autonomy and flexibility
 - Nonstandard hours
 - Reliance upon family for childcare

- Lack of knowledge about using a breast pump and maintaining milk production
- Lack of empowerment to advocate for needs

Supporting Working Women with Breastfeeding

- To balance the demands of work and family, women need:
 - Strategies for coping with fatigue and feelings of sadness over being separated from their baby
 - Support from family, especially if they are also the caregivers of the baby
 - Solutions for continuing to breastfeed after returning to work
 - Strategies for how to address their supervisor and co-workers
- Getting organized
 - Sample pumping schedules
 - Sample milk packing schedule (Wright 2013)
 - Storing milk
 - Phasing back to work
 - Preparing baby for the return to work
- Maintaining and building milk production when separated from the baby
 - “Magic Number” concept (Mohrbacher 2012)
 - Use the supply – but replace it!
 - Breastfeed exclusively when home with baby
 - Hands-on pumping
 - Breastfeed at night
 - Skin-to-skin helps increase production
 - Fully empty breast at least once daily
 - Power pumping (Cathy Watson Genna)
- Creative solutions for break time for expressing milk
 - Reasonable breaks protected under law
 - Staff coverage options (floater staff, supervisor/manager provides coverage, staff help each other out)
- Creative solutions for private space
 - Permanent space options
 - Flexible space options
 - Solutions for non-office settings
 - Retail
 - Restaurants
 - Agriculture
 - Manufacturing

National Resources from HHS Office on Women’s Health

- Online searchable resource
 - Featuring solutions of 200 businesses in all 22 industry categories
 - Searchable by industry sectors or by solution category
 - Hundreds of photos showcasing positive, doable solutions
 - Housed at the HHS Office on Women's Health
- 24 Business videos – featuring best practices in key industry sectors (with solutions and interviews of employers and employees)
- California videos showcased:
 - Carl's Jr.
 - City of Los Angeles
 - Reiter Affiliated Farms
 - University of California, Davis
- Presentation Platform, featuring:
 - Hundreds of solutions
 - Visual, interactive presentation design
 - To be housed at USBC website
 - Training will be offered in the use of the new materials
- Toolkits
 - K-12 Schools and Universities
 - Health Care Organizations
- Implementing the new resources
 - Local business meetings
 - State and local business events
 - One-on-one meetings with employers
 - Publicity for California businesses
 - Equipping and empowering mothers (classes, support groups, one-on-one education)

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