



Santa Clara County Mother Friendly Employer FAQ



What are the benefits of becoming a Mother Friendly Employer?

By becoming a Mother Friendly Employer, organizations are able to show that they understand the importance of breastfeeding and are committed to supporting mothers and families. Breastfeeding provides mothers, infants, families, and society with numerous benefits. Benefits of supporting breastfeeding to the employer include:

- Lower healthcare costs
- Improved employee morale
- Greater company loyalty
- Increased productivity
- Reduced absenteeism
- Lower employee turnover
- Public recognition

Mother Friendly Employers will also receive the following public recognition:

- Certificate indicating Mother Friendly Employer designation
- Ability to use Mother Friendly Employer seal to promote designation
- Listed online as a Mother Friendly Employer
 - Santa Clara County Public Health Department Website
 - Breastfeeding Task Force of Santa Clara County Facebook page
- Recognition at the Breastfeeding Task Force of Santa Clara Valley Breastfeeding Month Celebration in August

What is a reasonable amount of time for a pumping break?

Typically, a pumping session requires 20-40 minutes; however, the amount of time it takes varies from mother to mother.

A lactation break requires time to gather pumping supplies, get to the lactation space, clean hands, set up the pump, express milk, clean pump parts, store milk and return to the work area.

How many breaks will a lactating woman typically need?

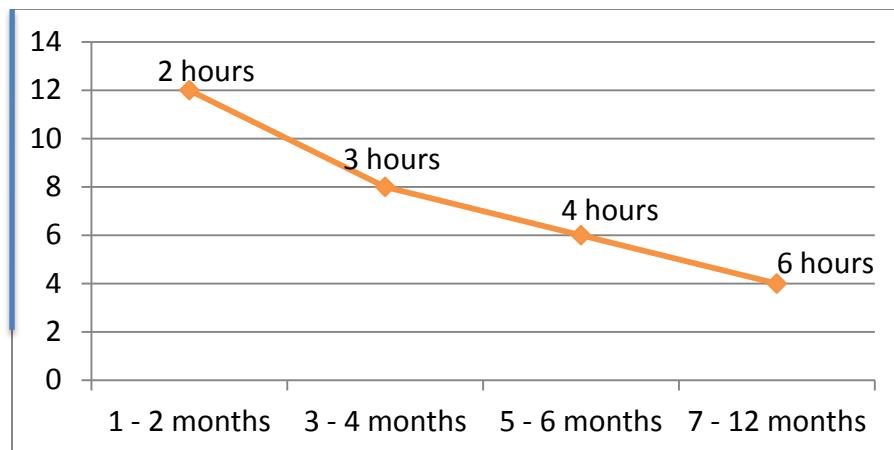
A lactating woman typically needs to express breast milk about every 2-3 hours when she is away from her baby. A pumping break in the morning, pumping during the lunch break and a pumping break in the afternoon works well for many women. Some women may require more or fewer breaks, depending on their specific need.



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Average Milk Expression Frequency



*Source: Wright, W. (2013). *Lactation Accommodation in the time of health care reform – How to make it work for employees and employers* [PowerPoint slides].

What types of locations can be used as a lactation accommodation space?

A variety of spaces can be used for expressing breast milk. Infrequently used or unused office space or other room may be converted into a lactation space. A small corner of a room can be sectioned off with either permanent walls or portable partitions.

Additional examples include a vacant office, conference room, or dressing room. A small storage area that can be made private can also be used; however, it must not contain noxious or hazardous materials. Any items used for cleaning should not be stored in a room used for lactation.

If no other alternative is available, a supervisor may vacate his or her own office to allow an employee to express milk.

A bathroom may not be used as a lactation accommodation space.

Can an employee use her own private office to pump?

Yes. An employee can pump in her own private office if it can be made private enough by closing doors and obscuring windows.



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Does a lactation accommodation space need to be dedicated only for this purpose, even if there are no breastfeeding mothers at the worksite?

A lactation accommodation space can be used for other purposes when a woman is not using it to pump.

What are hygienic and secure locations that employees can store breast milk?

Employers are encouraged to provide a refrigerator designated for breast milk storage located in the lactation accommodation space or other secure location.

The CDC does not list breast milk as a body fluid that requires special handling precautions¹. According to the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, breast milk “can be stored in a workplace refrigerator where other workers store food, although it should be labeled with name and date².”

Breast milk can also be stored in a personal cooler. If a refrigerator is not available for breast milk storage, a secure location, such as a locker or locked office, must be provided for women to store their personal coolers.

What are examples of ways to notify employees of the written lactation accommodation policy?

Notifying employees of the written lactation accommodation policy is important so that employees are aware of their employer’s support.

The Santa Clara County Mother Friendly Employer Program tool kit provides employers with a variety of templates to help communicate the policy to employees, including a PowerPoint Presentation and Brochure. The tool kit also contains a link to the Business Case for Breastfeeding, which includes a variety of additional resources. Examples of ways to notify employees of the policy include:

- Including in employee orientation materials
- Notifying employees at staff meetings
- Emailing all employees
- Posting the policy on the organization’s website

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010, April 19). *Breastfeeding: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS)*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/faq/>

² The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Protocol Committee. (2010). ABM Clinical Protocol #8: Human Milk Storage Information for Home Use for Full-Term Infants. *Breastfeeding Medicine*, 5, 127-130.



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- Holding “lunch and learn” sessions
- Including articles in organizational newsletters
- Posting materials on bulletin boards in break room and common areas
- Providing information at employee wellness or health fairs

This list is not an exhausted list, and employers may use other methods of notifying employees of the policy. Using multiple methods of communicating the policy to employees is helpful in ensuring that all employees receive the information and are aware of the policy. It is also recommended that employees are provided with a copy of the policy prior to leaving for maternity leave.

Are employers required to use the lactation accommodation policy template posted on the website in order to become a Mother Friendly Employer?

In order to become a Mother Friendly Employer, organizations must have a written lactation accommodation policy that meets the minimum requirements of the program. The template posted on the website meets the requirements of the program, and is designed to help employers develop a strong lactation accommodation policy. Employers are encouraged to adopt a policy that works best for their organization, and are not required to use the posted template. As long as the employer's policy meets the minimum requirements, they may become designated as a Mother Friendly Employer.

Who can I contact for more information or to get help developing a lactation accommodation policy and becoming a Mother Friendly Employer?

For more information, contact:

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