

The Basics of

# BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

**The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 6 months of exclusive breastfeeding and a diet consisting primarily of breast milk until at least age one.**

## **Studies show this provides decreased incidence of:**

- Ear infection
  - Allergies
  - Celiac disease
  - Childhood leukemia
  - Sudden infant death syndrome
  - Respiratory infection Eczema
  - Type I diabetes
  - Childhood lymphoma
  - Necrotizing enterocolitis
  - Asthma
  - Inflammatory bowel
  - Type II diabetes
  - Obesity
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- Recent national survey shows that while 75% of mothers initiate breastfeeding, only 13% meet these recommendations. Breastfeeding rates were the lowest in non-Hispanic black mothers and low-income families.
  - Mothers experience benefits, too – with lower incidence of postpartum depression, type II diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, and breast and ovarian cancer.<sup>1</sup>
  - If mothers were supported in meeting these recommendations, there would be a national savings of \$13 billion per year.<sup>2</sup>
  - Breastfed babies are easier to provide care for. Your children will be sick less often with a greater defense against contagious, fatal, and chronic disease. They are less likely to spit up, have constipation and diarrhea issues, and have less dirty diapers with less odor.
  - Your childcare service will be more marketable and will perform better in nutrition and health assessments.<sup>3</sup>

## **Business Case for Breastfeeding**

The benefits of breastfeeding don't stop with mother and child. Helping your employer to better understand the advantages to supporting nursing mothers can help ease the transition back to work and increase the likelihood of success for meeting breastfeeding goals. It can also save them \$3 for every \$1 invested.<sup>1,8,16,19</sup>

- Two simple actions have been found to be extremely cost-effective for worksites with nursing mothers:
  - Providing dedicated space for nursing mothers (as small as 4'x5')
  - Providing worksite lactation support

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- Breastfeeding parents are less likely to miss work due to child illness.  
*“One-day absences to care for sick children occur more than twice as often for mothers of formula feeding infants.”<sup>16,20</sup>*
- Breastfeeding support in the workplace means lower healthcare costs.  
*“One study found that for every 1,000 babies not breastfed, there were 2,033 extra physician visits, 212 extra hospitalization days, and 609 extra prescriptions for three illnesses alone – ear, respiratory, and gastrointestinal infection.”<sup>16,21</sup>*  
  
*“The Insurance company CIGNA 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.”<sup>16,22</sup>*
- Lower turnover rates, higher productivity and a greater loyalty.  
*“Being able to keep experienced employees after childbirth means lowering or eliminating the costs a company otherwise would incur to hire temporary staff or to recruit, hire, and train replacement staff, both of which involve additional lost revenue.”<sup>16</sup>*  
  
*“83 percent of employees were more positive about the company as a result of the program, and 67 percent intended to make it their long-term employer.”<sup>16,23</sup>*

**Copies can be  
obtained from the HRSA  
Information Center  
(1-888-ASK-HRSA)**

**FOR DETAILS:**

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/government-in-action/business-case-for-breastfeeding/>

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION:**

<http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/Portals/0/Publications/Workplace-2002-USBC.pdf>

Handout taken from the “2013 Midcoast Public Health CTG Breastfeeding resource toolkit for early childcare and education centers.”

