

BREASTPUMP INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS

Why this matters

Yes, we know it can be awkward to think about breastfeeding in the context of the workplace... and even more awkward to think of an employee, you know, pumping. But, the fact is that in order to continue providing human milk for her baby, a working mother must express her milk when separated from her baby for longer than a couple hours. This is important for two reasons. First, and most obvious, the expressed milk is what the baby will drink while the mother is at work. Second, and less obvious, is the fact that if a mother doesn't express milk frequently, her body will begin making less and less milk, to the point where she may not produce enough to adequately nourish her baby. Milk production is all about supply and demand – the demand must be steady to keep the supply strong.

Pump basics

To express milk efficiently (read less time away from work), a mother need a high quality electric pump. This can either be a single-user, personal pump (prices range from approximately \$200 to \$350) or a hospital-grade pump designed for sharing (approximately \$800 to \$2,000). Sharing a pump sounds strange, but know that each user provides her own milk collection kit (approximately \$50 to \$65), and it's convenient and completely sanitary.

Ideas for leading edge employers

Many employers (and/or health insurance providers) subsidize the cost of breastpumps, or even provide breastpumps for their employees. This is a wise investment in light of the significant savings lactation programs yield (reduced healthcare costs, lower absenteeism, and lower employee turnover).

If the employer provides a hospital-grade, multi-user pump, then employees need only purchase milk collection kits, and aren't burdened with carrying eight-pound pumps to and from work every day and setting them up each time they pump (read less time away from work).

As mentioned above, hospital-grade, multi-user pumps cost approximately \$800 to \$2,000. Alternatively, these pumps can be rented for approximately \$60 to \$80 per month.

For more information, contact

- Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition: www.coloradobreastfeeding.org or 303-869-1888
- Your local hospital's lactation services department
- Bosom Buddies, a Denver based company that provides "everything a breastfeeding mom could need." www.bosombuddies.com, 720-482-0109 x316, or 888-860-0041 x316
- Moms on Board, Cate Colburn-Smith: catecs@comcast.net or 303-440-7770