

## BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

Being a **breastfeeding-friendly workplace** can improve corporate image; organizations that **support breastfeeding women** are viewed as progressive **employers** who are **family, baby** and environmentally friendly (*York Region Health Services, 2001*).

### Taking the step forward...

The **Ontario Human Rights Commission** (2004) states that **employers** are required to **accommodate women** who are **breastfeeding**, unless meeting their needs is extremely costly or creates serious health and safety hazards.

### What are the benefits for the employer?

- **Less absenteeism (due to healthier babies)**
- **Less staff turnover**
- **Improved employee productivity**
- **Improved employee morale and satisfaction**

(*MLHU, 2003*)

### Making Positive Changes

#### Education and Skill-Building

- Provide information to all **employees** about the **benefits of breastfeeding**.
- Educate management about the **benefits of breastfeeding** and the **organizational breastfeeding policy** to ensure support and flexibility for the **breastfeeding employee**.

#### Environmental Support

- Encourage positive attitudes among employees and management regarding combining **breastfeeding and work**.
- Designate a clean, comfortable and private space within or near the **workplace** for **women to breastfeed** or **express breast milk**, which includes:
  - Comfortable chair with supportive arms
  - Small table and electrical outlet for those who use an electric pump
  - Baby-changing station and hand-washing facilities
  - Appropriate signage to ensure privacy
- Provide access to a refrigerator for storage of **expressed breast milk**.
- Consider purchasing an **electric breast-pump** (this reduces pumping time)
- Provide **work-based child-care** or assistance with finding **childcare** nearby.

## BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

- Encourage development of a network of women who can **support breastfeeding employees**.

A **breastfeeding-friendly workplace** may also positively influence a **breastfeeding mother's decision** about when to **return to work** (*Middlesex-London Health Unit [MLHU], 2003*).

### Policy Considerations

- Provide information about **breastfeeding policy** and rights to women before **maternity leave**.
- Offer **flexible breaks** to **accommodate pumping/breastfeeding** (the International Labour Organization recommends two additional 30-minute breaks in an eight-hour shift).
- Provide **phase back options, working at home, flex-time, part-time** and/or **job-sharing options**.
- Make **extended maternity leave** available.

*(MLHU, 2003; York Region Health Services, 2001; Ontario Public Health Association, 1996)*

### Additional Resources

#### Infant Feeding Action Coalition

(INFACT)

10 Trinity Square

Toronto, ON, M5G 1B1

416-595-9819

[www.infactcanada.ca](http://www.infactcanada.ca)

#### La Leche League

18C Industrial Drive

P.O. Box 29

Chesterville, ON, K0C 1H0

613-448-1842

[www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org)

#### Middlesex-London Health Unit

50 King St.

London, ON, N6A 5L7

519-663-5317 ext.2280

[www.healthunit.com](http://www.healthunit.com)

## BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

**Ontario Human Rights Commission**

[www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)

**World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action**

[www.waba.org.my](http://www.waba.org.my)

### REFERENCES:

*Canadian Pediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada, and Health Canada, **Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants**, Minister of Public Works and Government services. Ottawa, 2005*

*Middlesex-London Health Unit. (2003). "**Resource Package: Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace**." London, ON: Middlesex-London Health Unit.*

*Ontario Human Rights Commission (2004). **Pregnancy and Breastfeeding: Your Rights and Responsibilities**. Retrieved June 2, 2004 from [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca) .*

*Ontario Public Health Association. (1996). **Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace**. Toronto, ON: Ontario Public Health Association.*

*York Region Health Services, Public Health Branch. (2001). **Healthy Policy = Healthy Profits: A guide to implementing healthy workplace policies**. Richmond Hill, ON: York Region Health Services, Public Health Branch.*