

Breastfeeding Support in the Workplace Tips for Managers

As a manager or supervisor, you play an important role in an employee's successful transition from maternity/parental leave back to work. Please see the below information on how to support employees who breastfeed after they return to work.

Important: discussions between you and your employee about pumping breast milk should take place **before** and **after** her maternity leave. Be sure you revisit the pumping schedule periodically to ensure that the needs of the department and employee are being met as best as possible.



Discuss Space Available for Expressing Breast Milk

- Say something like, "I want you to know if you choose to breastfeed, UConn fully supports you and offers a clean, cozy environment to pump at work. If you want more information, just let me know or call the Office of Engagement & Wellness at 860-486-8306 or email worklife@uconn.edu."
- Know where the closest Lactation Rooms are to your building, where to find the list of all locations, and where to register for access to the rooms. https://hr.uconn.edu/Lactation_Room_Locations.pdf
- If a Lactation Room is not convenient or available, provide a private and clean room with an outlet, table and chair, close to a location that has sink access, with a door that locks from the inside.
- Do not suggest that the nursing mother pump in the bathroom. This is illegal.

Discuss the Work Schedule and Timing of Breaks

- Have a good understanding of time expectations (most nursing moms need 2-3, 15-20 minute breaks to pump); plus include transportation time to and from the Lactation Room.
- Talk about how to schedule pump time so that the employee knows what's expected and can plan her day accordingly.
- Be honest about any concerns that you may have about the schedule.
- Be flexible in work schedules to enable sufficient pumping time. If a mother takes more time pumping than she has for paid breaks, allow time to be made up instead of taking unpaid time if possible.
- Remember that finding coverage for a new mom to pump is just as important as coverage for the employee wanting to leave early to attend a loved one's evening activities.

Open the Lines of Communication

- Make sure the employee has somewhere to keep her pump in a safe, clean environment.
- Be supportive and encouraging. This can be a very emotional time as well as slightly embarrassing to talk about, especially with a male manager.
- Moms need to store their milk in a cold, clean space, and may need a designated space in a refrigerator.
- Provide a “Please do not Disturb” hangtag for the nursing mother to use for her lactation space. Contact worklife@uconn.edu for a hangtag.

What to Share with Co-Workers

- Inform staff on a need-to-know basis only in consultation with the employee. Some nursing mothers want to keep the information private.
- Manage gossip by communicating about the schedule and space impact on a need-to-know basis.
- Inform Facilities staff/custodians of the pumping room schedule as needed to prevent interruption.

Please email worklife@uconn.edu if you need assistance handling specific issues regarding breastfeeding employees.