

Procedure



BREASTFEEDING IN THE WORKPLACE – PROMOTING, PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING

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Summary	To ensure a consistent, proactive and sensitive approach to support CCLHD employees to combine breastfeeding and work. Compliance with this procedure is mandatory.
Author Department	Workforce Services Nutrition Services CCLHD Women's, Children and Family Health – Maternity Services CCLHD
Contact (Details)	Bronwyn Francis-Carabott Workforce & Culture
Endorsed By	Belinda Collier, Director Workforce & Culture
Sector/Service	CCLHD
Audience	All staff
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Related Policy/s	PD2011_042 - Breastfeeding in NSW: Promotion, Protection and Support PD2010_019 - Breast Milk - Maternity: Safe Management Relevant Industrial instruments, Awards and Determinations
Key Words	Maternity leave, breastfeeding, lactation, lactation break
Status	Active

Title: **Breastfeeding in the Workplace – Promoting, Protecting and Supporting**

1. Scope of Practice

This procedure applies to all Central Coast Local Health District (CCLHD) staff, particularly those that currently are or intend to breastfeed their infant or child.

2. Expected Outcome

- To promote, protect and support breastfeeding in the workplace¹
- Improve the retention rate of female employees in the workforce after maternity leave
- Facilitate earlier return to work for some mothers
- Provide a positive image to the community on being a breastfeeding friendly workplace

3. Definitions

Breastfeeding: Is the biological norm for providing an infant or child with the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development with [milk](#) from a woman's [breasts](#)².

Child(ren): refers to the breastfed infant or child of the employee.

Caregiver: is a person, chosen by the mother to care for her child while she is at work.

Lactation Break: Is a break from work responsibilities for the purpose of an employee expressing their breasts and/or to breastfeed.

4. Procedure

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommend that babies be breastfed until two years of age and beyond. The first six months of which should be exclusive breastfeeding followed by gradual introduction of solids³.

NSW Health is committed to fostering a supportive work environment for breastfeeding employees. Providing support for breastfeeding is the key to fostering a workplace that is free of discrimination, offers equal employment opportunity and is family friendly¹.

CCLHD acknowledges that breast milk is the optimal source of infant nutrition for healthy growth and development. CCLHD recognises the importance of breastfeeding for both the mother and the baby.

This Breastfeeding Procedure provides a framework for a flexible and consultative approach to support women employed within CCLHD to balance continuing breastfeeding and work responsibilities by:

- Providing information to employees on work practices that promote and protect breastfeeding and or to assist their return to work after maternity leave

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- Ensuring that facilities are available for the purpose of breastfeeding and/or lactation in all work locations in CCLHD.
- Providing employees with access to flexible work, rostering and leave arrangements; including part-time work, job sharing and paid lactation breaks³.

4.1 Provision of Workplace Facilities

CCLHD will provide workplace facilities for employees who continue to express breast milk or breastfeed their babies after returning to work. The provision of facilities will vary for individual employees and workplace requirements due to the diverse nature of both the workforce and the business of CCLHD. Consideration is to be given to space and logistic restrictions.

The provision of workplace facilities is to include the following⁴ (where possible).

- A private, hygienic and lockable space that is kept clean and suitably sign posted.
- Comfortable and appropriate seating.
- A table or bench to support breastfeeding and/or lactating equipment.
- A power point suitable for the operation of a breast pump.
- Access to facilities for nappy changing, washing or equipment and hand hygiene purposes.
- Access to existing refrigerators (in appropriate locations) for storage of breast milk.
- Facilities for storage of breast pump and other equipment (eg. A cupboard or locker).
- An appropriate container for rubbish disposal (including nappy disposal).
- Provide a means of booking the facility.

4.2 Lactation Breaks

Lactation breaks are available for employees who are returning to work and are combining work and breastfeeding. These breaks are essential for maintaining breast milk supply. Lactation breaks are specifically for employees who need to breastfeed (go to the baby or have the baby brought into the workplace) or express breast milk during work hours.

Employees combining work and breastfeeding are granted up to a total of 1 hour as paid lactation breaks during an 8 hour working day. Where an employee works more or less than an 8 hour working day, lactation breaks may be accessed on a pro rata basis based on their hours of work. The period of paid lactation breaks includes all travelling time for employees who take their lactation breaks off the work site.

A flexible approach to lactation breaks is needed with mutual agreement between an employee and their manager provided the total lactation break time entitlement is not exceeded. For example, some breastfeeding employees may require two 30 minute paid lactation breaks, whereas a break of one hour or even less may be required by other employees.

The timing of lactation breaks is to take both the organisation and employee needs into account, with a focus on minimising disruption in the workplace. Where emergency situations

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or client service/patient care issues delay the taking of lactation breaks, efforts should be made to ensure that employees are able to take the lactation breaks as soon as it is practicable to do so.

4.3 Manager Responsibility

Managers have a responsibility to:

- Discuss the paid lactation break needs of the employee and together complete a written agreement that clearly outlines the agreed work and breastfeeding arrangements (frequency and duration of breaks), before the first lactation break is taken. This agreement is to be signed by both the manager and the employee.
- Agreement for lactation breaks is to be reviewed on a monthly basis and a copy of written agreements is to be stored by the manager.
- Discuss suitable locations for breastfeeding and “lactation breaks” with the employee.
- Assess and document any identified risks associated with providing facilities for the purpose of this policy.

Factors managers are to take into account are:

- Availability of a suitable facility
- The identified risks associated with the workplace
- The adjustments that may need to take place in the workplace to meet the needs of the breastfeeding employee.

4.4 Employee Responsibility

Employees have a responsibility to:

- Notify their manager of their intention to return to work and they will be continuing with breastfeeding.
- Discuss their specific needs and current situation with their manager.
- Negotiate lactation break times with manager and complete written agreement before the first lactation break is taken.
- Supply appropriate storage containers for expressed breastmilk and clearly label these containers with their name and date before placing it in the specified refrigerator.
- Provide personal breast milk expressing equipment.

Employee’s obligation under the Work Health and Safety Legislation include:

- Ensure caregivers entering the workplace do so on the understanding that restricted access will apply.
- Children are delivered directly to the workplace facility designated for the purpose of each lactation break.
- Caregivers and the child or children in their care vacate the workplace promptly at the completion of each lactation break.

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4.5 Responsibility of All CCLHD Employees

All CCLHD employees are to:

- Treat employees who are breastfeeding with respect and dignity
- Refrain from behaviours that may constitute unlawful discrimination.

5. References

1. NSW Department of Health Policy Directive, [PD2011_042: 'Breastfeeding in NSW: Promotion, Protection and Support'](#)
2. [World Health Organisation \(2011\) Breastfeeding Topics](#)
3. [National Health and Medical Research Council \(2013\) Infant Feeding Guidelines. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council.](#)
4. [Australian Breastfeeding Association Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Accreditation](#)
5. [Circular 2010-13 Breastfeeding Policy \(sent out with Premier & Cabinet Breastfeeding Policy 2010\)](#)
6. [Sex and Age Discrimination Legislation Amendment Act 2011, No. 40, 2011, section 7AA.](#)

6. Revision & Approval History

Date	Revision No.	Author and Approval

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