



## Considerations for Safe Worksite Lactation Spaces During the COVID-19 Pandemic

### Breastfeeding Matters!

- Breastfeeding remains important for infants during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the best source of nutrition for most infants and provides anti-infective properties to protect against many illnesses and diseases.<sup>1</sup>
- Breastfeeding can help mitigate some of the health disparities among vulnerable infants and children. Suboptimal breastfeeding poses a greater burden of disease among African American and Hispanic populations.<sup>2</sup>
- It is currently believed that mothers do not transmit the SARS-COVI-2 virus to their infants through breastfeeding. However, mothers should take precautions to avoid spreading the virus to her infant (e.g., handwashing and wearing a face covering).
- Current studies show that breastfeeding does not appear to contain the active SARS-COVI-2 virus.<sup>3-4</sup>

### General Workplace Safety Considerations<sup>5</sup>

- Inspect facility ventilation systems and update or improve as needed.
  - If a designated milk expression area is located in a closet or storage area, assure that the space is well-ventilated.
- Employees should wear masks and maintain social distancing in the workplace.
  - If multi-user milk expression areas are available, assure appropriate distancing between users with appropriate barriers as needed.
- Employees should wash hands frequently or use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. Consider touchless hand sanitizing stations.
  - When constructing a new milk expression area, consider a location that is along the plumbing line in the facility to install a sink. Breastfeeding employees can use this to wash their hands before and after expressing milk, and to keep breast pump parts clean and sanitary.
  - Include hand sanitizer and anti-bacterial wipes in all milk expression areas.
- Limit using office spaces of others where possible.
  - Consider other locations for expressing milk if the company's lactation accommodations call for asking employees to express in the office(s) of other workers. Consider a safer alternative, such as an unused office, a well-ventilated storage room, or a space sectioned off with appropriate barriers.
- Avoid group events and opt for virtual meetings.
  - Consider virtual "back to work" classes or support group meetings for new parents and their childcare providers.



## Cleaning and Disinfecting<sup>6</sup>

- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched frequently such as computer keyboards, phones, doorknobs, handrails, etc.
  - Wipe doorknobs, keypads, and surfaces within the milk expression area.
  - Consider providing a milk expression chair that can easily be wiped clean. Use antibacterial wipes to clean before and after use.
  - Urge breastfeeding employees to wipe the outside of their breast pump before and after use (especially if it is a multi-user pump shared between employees). Wipe the outside surface of the pump, power switch, and controls that the employee touches. Wipe the flat surface or countertop the breast pump is on.
- Keep breast pump and parts clean and sanitized.<sup>7</sup>
  - Clean pump parts that come into contact with the breast or breastmilk as soon as possible after pumping. Rinse all pump flanges, tubing, and collection containers after use. Wash in hot soapy water in a separate basin used only for cleaning infant feeding items. They may also be washed in a dishwasher.
  - For extra germ removal, sanitize the pump parts, wash basin, and bottle brush daily. This can be done using the dishwasher sanitize cycle, by steam, or by bringing the items to a boil and removing with tongs to dry on a clean, dry towel.

## Learn more about Worksite Lactation Support:

- Ohio Workplace PLUS Toolkit - available at <https://www.odh.ohio.gov/breastfeeding>
- Free webinar recording at Ohio Department of Health. Includes information on supporting breastfeeding employees during COVID crisis: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/1409064141205345281> or at the ODH website at: <https://www.odh.ohio.gov/breastfeeding>

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Care for Breastfeeding Women. Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/care-for-breastfeeding-women.html>. Last updated May 5, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Bartick M, Jegier B, Green B, Schwarz E, Reinhold A, Stuebe A. Disparities in breastfeeding: impact on maternal and child health outcomes and costs. *Pediatrics*. 2017;181:49-55.

<sup>3</sup> Salvatori G, De Rose DU, Concato, C, et al. Managing COVID-19-positive maternal-infant dyads: an Italian Experience. *Breastfeeding Med*. 2020 August;15(5).

<sup>4</sup> Chambers C, Krogstad P, Bertrand K, et al. Evaluation for SARS-COV-2 in breast milk from 18 infected women. *JAMA*. 2020 August 19.

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Businesses and Workplaces. Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>. Last updated September 2, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Businesses and Workplaces, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *How to Keep Your Breast Pump Kit Clean*. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/hygiene/breast-pump-fact-sheet-p.pdf>