Breastfeeding and work
Content

- Importance of breastfeeding
- Situation in the world
- Cost
- What can they do
  - The employer
  - The co-worker
  - The mother
Why is breastfeeding so important?

For the baby:
- Improves job performance in adulthood
- Increases intelligence (6 points higher in average)
- Reduces the frequency and severity of infectious diseases
- Reduces the risk of hypertension, type 2 diabetes and leukemia
- Reduces the risk of death in the neonatal period

For the mother:
- Prevents breast and ovarian cancer
Duration of breastfeeding (months) in Latin America and the Caribbean: National studies from 2002 to 2010

Exclusive breastfeeding in infants <6 months (%) in Latin America and the Caribbean: 2002-2010

Changes in the duration of breastfeeding in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Dominican Republic

WHO recommendations on feeding practices and global situation (46 surveys, 2002-2008)

Cost of sub-optimal breastfeeding practices in the US

- US$ 13 total trillion
- US$ 2.5 billion in health costs
- US$ 10.5 billion premature deaths

One of these candies was wrapped in a public restroom. Which one would you eat?
How does the employer get benefits from breastfeeding?

- Better satisfaction and loyalty of employees
- Increased retention of employees
- Lower absenteeism, since those babies get sick less
- Improved corporate image
- Lower costs of health care

- Mothers who feed with formulas are absent to take care of their sick children more than twice as many days than mothers who breastfeed
How to transform the company or institution into a “Friendly Breastfeeding Workplace”?

• Draft a corporate policy with at least 4 lines, saying the company or institution:
  • supports breastfeeding
  • provides the conditions leading to the maintenance of exclusive breastfeeding for six months and total duration of breastfeeding for two years or more
  • is flexible regarding breaks and allows women to express milk every three hours
  • has a lactation room that is hygienic, private, comfortable and easily accessible
How to establish a nursing room?

A nursing room requires the following facilities and supplies:

- appropriate dimensions
- comfortable chair, a sink, and a refrigerator
- good lighting and ventilation
- electrical outlet
- blackboard where mothers can place pictures of their babies
Example of a nursing room

Ministry of Health, Argentina
How can the mother plan breastfeeding when going back to work?

- **During pregnancy:**
  - Knowing her legal rights relating to maternity leave
  - Discussing with her boss the plans to breastfeed
  - Finding out if the company offers a support program and a nursing room or private area (not a bathroom!) where she can express breast milk

- **During maternity leave:**
  - Taking as many weeks as she possibly can
  - Practicing expressing milk manually or with a quality pump
  - Helping her baby to adapt to drinking breast milk in a cup
# How to preserve breastmilk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>Room temperature (&gt; 25oC/ 77oF)</td>
<td>6-8 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freezing ball</td>
<td>15 to -4oC/ 9.4 to -15oF</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fridge</td>
<td>-4 oC/ -20oF</td>
<td>5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freezer</td>
<td>-15oC/ -26oF</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How can the co-worker help?

- Supporting the mother to have flexible breaks, replacing her in some of her tasks, or coordinating with her on her breaks

- Making her feel she is not alone in her attempt to breastfeed and that she is not making co-workers uncomfortable with her decision

- If having a mother under supervision: offering her alternatives to facilitate her return to work such as reduced hours, weekly day off, or even work from home
Thank you!

Additional material is available at: www.paho.org/wbw