

# AUGUST IS BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS MONTH

## Rights Of Breastfeeding Moms At Work In The Philippines

Medical studies have proven that breast milk gives babies the ideal nutrition. Breastfed babies were found out to have lower tendencies to acquire infections and other illnesses. Likewise, breastfeeding helps babies bond with their mothers and feel utmost security. With all its positive benefits, health organizations in the country urge mothers to breastfeed their children ideally up to two years of age. For breastfeeding moms who are also working, it's difficult to express milk and also follow your companies' work policies. They need nursing rooms and enough time to breast pump at work. As such, the government recognized the situation of breastfeeding moms in their workplace. In 2009, the [Republic Act 10028](#) or the Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act was signed to support, protect and encourage women who are breastfeeding working moms. Through the law, there were provisions which requires workplaces to implement certain regulations. In turn, these will be highly beneficial to breastfeeding moms at work.

### 1. Lactation Station

The law requires workplaces to establish a lactation station for nursing mothers. For both health and non-health companies, there must be lactation stations with complete equipment and facilities such as: lavatory for hand-washing, refrigeration facilities for storing breast milk, electrical outlets for breast pumps, comfortable seats and table. The law requires that the station must not be located in the toilet. Moreover, establishments must not promote, market or sell infant formula milk within these lactation stations.

### 2. Lactation Periods

Breastfeeding moms are entitled to an additional break called lactation periods. These break intervals will include the time it takes to get to and from their workplace to the company's lactation station. The law mandates that these are considered compensated hours. Although the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) can approve adjustments, the law requires not less than 40 minutes of lactation break for every 8-hour working period. With this,

breastfeeding moms can have 2-3 breast milk expressions lasting 15-30 min each within a workday.

### 3. Breastfeeding Programs

The law mandates that employers must include breastfeeding programs as part of their human resource development programs. They must disseminate the provisions to their staff and employees. Similarly, pregnant employees must be informed on how to combine work and breastfeeding after their maternity leave. Employers should provide them regular breastfeeding education through brochures, pamphlets and other educational materials. Information should include manual breastfeeding expression, storing and transporting of breast milk, cup feeding and handling. The law applies to all government and private health or non-health companies. Establishments must secure a "Working Mother-Baby-Friendly Certificate" from the Department of Health. Exceptions may only be given under peculiar circumstances of the workplace such as number of women employees and physical size of the establishment. Those who will fail to comply will receive sanctions and pay necessary fines depending on the number of offenses. It is important for breastfeeding moms to be aware of the above-mentioned rights and benefits. With a law designed to protect breastfeeding moms at work, breastfeeding working moms must also find suitable breast pumps.

Source : [www.babymama.ph](http://www.babymama.ph)