

Introduction

Breastfeeding is the best way of feeding the baby for the first six months of life (**Sandes et al., 2005**).

Human milk is uniquely adapted to the infant's needs and is the most appropriate milk for the human infant. Breastfeeding has practical and psychological advantages. Thus, all mothers should be encouraged to breast-feed their babies (**Nelson, 2008**).

Mothers who work outside the home initiate breastfeeding at the same rate as mothers who stay at home. However, the breastfeeding continuance rate declines sharply in mothers who return to work. While the work environment may be less than ideal for the breastfeeding mother, obstacles can be overcome (**Biagioli et al., 2003**).

Several workers have demonstrated that working status had no effect on initiation of breastfeeding but had an effect on breastfeeding duration. Working mothers were more likely to stop breastfeeding than none-working mothers (**Ong et al., 2001**).

Weaning correlates with the time that many women return to work and it may be speculated that many women wean their children prior to returning to work because they have concluded that they will not be able to manage both breastfeeding and employment (**Roe et al., 1999**).

Factors can act as barriers to women continuing to breastfeed on their return to paid employment include: lack of child-care at or near the workplace; inadequate work conditions such as breastfeeding breaks, places to express and store breast milk; lack of workplace policies; and societal attitudes towards breastfeeding (**Barber-Madden et al., 1987**).

Mothers can be encouraged to explore various options to balancing breastfeeding and employment. In addition, to taking maternity leave, the breastfeeding mother can consider returning to work part time and gradually return to full time employment. Healthcare professionals can recommend that, a woman explore whether her employer has a work place lactation program, because this program often include flexible breaks, flexible work hours and part time work (**Roe et al., 1999**).

Healthcare providers may want to encourage a mother to express and store her breast milk during her maternity leave in preparation for returning to work. It is recommended that a mother begin expressing breast milk after the baby is 2 to 4 weeks old (**Pryor et al., 1997**).

After a mother expresses her milk at work, it should be kept cool through storage in refrigerator or cold storage container with ice packs (**Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine; ABM, 2008**).

Feeding the infant directly from the breast during the work day is the most effective strategy for combining breastfeeding and work ways to enable direct feeding include on site child care, keeping the infant at work, allowing the mother to leave work to go to the infant, and having the infant brought to work site (**Fein et al., 2008**).