

## **FACTS: WHY BREASTFEEDING MATTERS**

### **Lactation rooms are a requirement for ALL Navy commands.**

The Navy continues to encourage and support accommodations to best meet the needs of our nursing Service members and their infants. Sailors who desire to pump breast milk upon return to duty will be, at the minimum, afforded the availability of a clean, secluded space (**not a toilet space**) with ready access to a water source. Commands must ensure Sailors who are breastfeeding are afforded access to cool storage for expressed breast milk.

Highlights from Navy Guidelines Concerning Pregnancy and Parenthood ([OPNAVINST 6000.1D](#)):

- (1) Commanding Officers (CO) must develop command policies to delineate support of breastfeeding Service members, as directed in [BUMEDINST 6000.14B](#).
- (2) COs must ensure the availability of a private, clean room for expressing breast milk. A separate toilet space is unacceptable for breast milk expression due to sanitary concerns. Commands must ensure breastfeeding Sailors have ready access to running water for hand washing and pump equipment cleaning within the same room as the lactation room. Sailors may store breast milk in an insulated container for up to 24 hours and refrigerated for up to 5 days. Breast milk should be contained and labeled to avoid contamination by other items located in the vicinity.
- (3) Requests to physically breastfeed infants during duty hours should be handled on a case-by-case basis. Breastfeeding an infant is not justification for granting excessive time for meals or from work.
- (4) Medical treatment facilities (MTF) will provide Sailors access to instructional materials, breastfeeding education, counseling, and support during the pregnancy, after delivery, and upon return to work.

### **Breastfeeding/pumping is medically recommended for both Sailors *and* their children.**

Support of Servicewomen in Lactation and Breastfeeding ([BUMEDINST 6000.14B](#)) states:

The Surgeon General of the United States has emphasized breastfeeding as one of the most important contributors to infant and maternal health.

The American Academy of Pediatrics endorses exclusive breast milk feeding for infants from birth up to about 6 months of age, with continuation of breastfeeding for 1 year of longer as mutually desired.

There is strong evidence that exclusive breastfeeding reduces ear infections, respiratory illnesses, asthma, atopic dermatitis, sudden infant death syndrome, gastroenteritis and diarrhea.

The evidence also exists that breastfeeding lessens maternal postpartum blood loss, decreases the risk of ovarian and pre-menopausal breast cancer, reduced the development of childhood obesity, childhood asthma and type-2 diabetes mellitus.

### **Breastfeeding/pumping increases personnel and command readiness.**

Support of Servicewomen in Lactation and Breastfeeding ([BUMEDINST 6000.14B](#)) states:

Given the evidence of the direct relationship between breastfeeding and illness reduction, efforts to increase breastfeeding rates will decrease health care costs and increase workplace productivity through reduced absenteeism, improved morale and Service member retention.

### **Breastfeeding/pumping saves money.**

Breastmilk is a free food option for infants. In comparison, powdered formula can cost \$50-\$100 a month depending on brand and child's age and weight. For Sailors, formula costs can add up quickly.

### **Breastfeeding/pumping is not for everyone and is a personal choice.**

Every Sailor who gives birth must make their own decision on how they will feed their child, such as breastfeeding, pumping and bottle feeding breastmilk, using formula or using a combination of methods. Similarly, every Sailor must decide whether they want to pump at work, and if so, for how long. These are personal choices for each Sailor to make on their own after consultation with their doctor.