

The Breastfeeding Podcast by Ameda

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: My name’s Elisabeth McLaury Lewin and I’ll be talking today with Nancy Mohrbacher. She’s an international Board Certified Lactation Consultant and the co-author, with Kathleen Kendall-Tackett of *Breastfeeding Made Simple: Seven Natural Laws for Nursing Mothers*. Nancy’s also the co-author of *The Breastfeeding Answer Book* which is a definitive encyclopedia of breastfeeding information which is used by doctors, nurses, lactation consultants and breastfeeding helpers around the world. Nancy’s the Lactation Consultant for Ameda Breastfeeding Products at Hollister Incorporated. And she’s been helping breastfeeding families since 1982. Nancy’s going to talk with us today about the whole issue of working and breastfeeding. Hi Nancy.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Hi Elizabeth.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: When you and I had children, and that’s been more than a decade ago, it was thought that if you were, you know, a breastfeeding mom, you’d probably be home for, you know, at least 6 months to a year with your child and increasingly as time’s gone on, it is much more commonplace for moms to go back to work after a month or two and that brings up some different questions for the mom who’s planning on breastfeeding her baby. What are some of the things that a breastfeeding mom needs to think about when she’s thinking about going back to work and continuing to breastfeed her baby?

Nancy Mohrbacher: That’s a good question. I would say probably the most important thing is to think about what her breastfeeding goals are. There are some women who can’t imagine how to make breastfeeding work once they go back to work but I think the message I would like to give is that breastfeeding does not have to be all or nothing; that some breastfeeding is always better than none. And even if a mother works in a situation where it’s impossible for her to breastfeed there or to express her milk, there are still ways that she can continue to breastfeed part time while she’s at home. So when you’re thinking about your choices, they fall into several different categories. For example, one would be the mom who is really committed to giving her milk alone, even when she’s working. And there’s several ways that she could do that. One would be to keep her baby with her. One would be to have the baby brought to her at work for feedings. Another way is to do what’s called reverse cycle nursing, which is when the baby actually takes their long sleep period when the mother’s at work and so doesn’t really need to feed much and feeds mostly when the mother’s at home. So that’s one way. Another way would be to pump their milk at work for all the missed feedings. And some mothers are very diligent about doing this. So getting a good quality pump and making sure they

have enough milk each day to cover what the baby needs for feedings. Another alternative that some mothers do is that they have some milk that they've expressed that they leave for the baby, but then they also leave some formula as well. So it could be a mixture of the two. And what some mothers do is they give only formula when they're away and then they breastfeed when they're home. So those are some options.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: So it sounds like it's not an all or nothing thing and it's also not just a cut and dried, there's only one way to get this done.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Right. I think that's true about breastfeeding as a whole-- is that there's never just one way that mothers make it work. There's always lots of creativity involved.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: It's definitely different from family to family and it's different from child to child within that same family I think.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Yes. Another choice that a mother makes when she's thinking about going back to work is who's going to care for her baby when she's at work and where they're located. And that can actually have a big impact on breastfeeding, sometimes more than moms expect. For example, if they have the choice of having a caregiver close to home or some people actually have the caregiver in their home. But another option that they have is to find someone to care for their baby close to where they work. And the advantage of that is that mothers then spend less travel time away from their babies and that does cut down on their need to express their milk and it may make it easier to go to the baby or have the baby brought to them at feeding times.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: I marvel when I hear about how imaginative and creative different parents are at getting those things put together so moms that can structure their days so that they pop over to the sitter's house at lunchtime or even going to the point of changing jobs so that they're working someplace where there's on-site care or working a couple of days a week from home; just all kinds of different creative ways of getting the work done and still being able to meet baby's needs.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Yeah, I think going back to work after having the baby definitely takes lots of planning, no matter how you feed your baby. Both working and caring for a baby are very demanding and it causes many mothers to re-think some of their priorities.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: Now let's say someone's got that wonderful new baby and they've had their time recovering from childbirth and getting used to breastfeeding. Once

back at work, how can a mom maintain her milk supply if she's hoping to keep it at the same level that it was when she was home all the time?

Nancy Mohrbacher: That's a very common question and concern that mothers have and I've talked to a lot of mothers in my work at Ameda. Many of the calls I get are from mothers who've gone back to work and have issues with this and I think the most important thing to think about-- we talked when we were discussing milk supply about the most important aspect being the number of times in a 24-hour day that the breasts are drained either by breastfeeding or breast pumping. And what often happens when moms go back to work; many of them are actually pumping enough times at work and we'll talk about how many times that is in just a few minutes, but what sometimes happens is they're not always breastfeeding as often as they had been at home. So what I usually suggest that moms do is think back to when—right before they started work-- and figure out how many times in a 24-hour day their baby was breastfeeding and have that be their “magic number.” Because we've talked about in “Milk Supply” the importance of breast storage capacity on how many times a day a mother needs to drain her breasts to keep up her supply-- the storage capacity being the amount of milk she can comfortably hold in her breasts before they start to feel full. Because drained breasts make milk faster and full breasts, when they get to feeling full, actually that slows down milk production. So when they figure out their “magic number,” and in many cases it's going to be around 8 or 9 times in 24 hours, then the idea is to try to keep that “magic number” as steady as they can once they go back to work. So in some cases they may pump maybe pump a little less at work, but breastfeed more at home.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: And I don't know what your experience has been, but I know just anecdotally the moms I've helped as a volunteer oftentimes tell me that the baby, of its own accord, figures out that it's much more advantageous to breastfeed as often as possible when mom is home, and like you talked about earlier, that reverse cycle feeding, may nurse much more frequently throughout the afternoon and evening and into the early morning and not be so concerned with eating very much during the daytime when mom is away.

Nancy Mohrbacher: When a baby responds that way, that actually is a really great way to keep up milk supply because then that “magic number” can stay steady. But what happens other times is that the babies actually are content to sleep for long stretches when the mother is home and that's why I think what happens at work is important in terms of the number of times the breasts are drained. But it's also equally important what happens at home, because sometimes when I talk to mothers in detail about what's going on, for example, if they're gone for 9 hours away from their baby during the day, they may tell me that they pump 3 times which would be the recommended number of times. Usually we suggest dividing the number of hours away from the baby, including

travel time, by 3 and coming up with the number for pumping. But they may only be breastfeeding maybe twice when they're home and so while they were breastfeeding 8 or 9 times when they were home with their baby, now that they're back at work, the number of times they're draining their breasts has gone down to let's say 5 and that causes their milk supply to decrease.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: What are some things that a mom should look out for to make sure the baby's continuing to get enough, even as his feeding patterns change and her pumping patterns change? Are there just a few things to keep in your head while you're doing that?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well, from a baby's standpoint, the weight gain is always the most important thing and if a baby's gaining. In the first 3 to 4 months, you want to see a gain of around 6 ounces a week is average. And if a baby's gaining well, then you know the baby's taking what they need. And in some cases, if a mother has a really large breast storage capacity, we talked about this in the “Milk Supply” podcast, it may be that for one individual mother, 5 times a day might be the right “magic number” for her and her baby. But I would say that's probably on one end of the spectrum in terms of what's normal. For most moms, it would probably be more like 7 or 8 or 9, depending on the mother and baby.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: Do you think that those pumping sessions when mom is away from the baby should be at about the same time every day? Does that matter? If mom's schedule is erratic, is it okay if it's at odd times?

Nancy Mohrbacher: I've had mothers ask me that question and you know, I think it varies by mother. Some mothers, for some reason, seem to respond well to the clock. It's like we talked about in the “Pumping” podcast, breast pumping, that part of getting your milk to release to a pump is a conditioned response. And for some mothers, they look at it that it's the right time that is a conditioned response for them. But for most moms, I would say it's not so important the exact time that they pump. What's more important is the number in 24 hours that they're draining their breasts. So for example some mothers might be able to breastfeed every hour when they're home in the evening and that could make up for maybe fewer pumpings during the day. So that what goes on in a 24-hour period is probably more important. Another aspect that's also very important is what is the longest stretch between breast drainings, whether it's breastfeeding or pumping. And for most moms, it's going to be at night; especially once they're back at work. So I do talk to some moms who are having issues with their milk supply and when I ask them what's the longest stretch, they may tell me a stretch as long as 12 hours.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: Oh my goodness.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Right. And as I mentioned earlier, drained breasts make milk faster and full breasts make milk slower, so for mothers, letting her breasts get so full over a 12-hour period that she’s really feeling full, then that’s sending her body the signal to slow down on her milk supply.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: I see. So at that 12-hour point when she does pump, she may get a great deal of milk, but she’s also sent the signal to her body to make less for next time.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Right.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: I see. So that could cause a cycle of decreased supply which could get you in kind of a mess after a while.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Sometimes mothers think that if they wait a while they’ll get more milk, which is true, but it’s important also to factor in that drained breasts make milk faster and full breasts make milk slower, because even if for, let’s say for a few days or even a week, they still get the same amount of milk, they may be sending that signal to slow down milk production.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: I see. Now I know it’s going to be different depending on the kind of work that mom does, someone who’s working as a waitress may have different circumstances than someone who’s got a private office with a door, but how do you go about pumping while at work?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well, you’re right that work circumstances can make a big difference. There was an article in the New York Times not long ago about a very large national company that had a wonderful lactation support program in their corporate offices, but when you went to their local outlets you found that there was really no provision at all for breastfeeding and that the mothers were giving up because there was no place or time built into their work day for them to pump. So your work setting can make a difference. It’s usually easier in an office setting to manage this, but if you happen to be, for example, in retail or if you happen to be a field hand in an agricultural business or if you’re a postal carrier or a bus driver, that can obviously make a big difference. If you are expressing your milk at work, it is important to have some place where you have a little privacy obviously. Because most mothers are going to be more relaxed and be able to express more easily if they aren’t tense. We talked about that in

the “Breast Pumping” podcast about how tension can inhibit your milk flow. So that’s one thing. And it could be different in different places. For example, I think one of the things those of us in breastfeeding are trying to encourage right now when employers think about lactation in the workplace, is to be creative. Because even if you are a small business, if for example, you put up a screen in a manager’s office, that may be all a mother needs to have a little bit of privacy in order to express her milk. It doesn’t have to be a separate room. You know you can really think about it in a more flexible way. But a private place is one important thing. Another is to have a good breast pump, if that’s what you’re using. If you don’t have access to your baby and you need to express your milk, some mothers do use manual expression; I find most of the mothers I talk to, probably because I work for a breast pump company, are more interested in pumping their milk. But we talked also in the “Breast Pumping” podcast about how to choose a breast pump. It’s usually best to get the highest quality pump that you can afford because, especially if you’re working full time, that can make a huge difference.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: It’s going to do a more efficient job of getting more milk in a shorter amount of time.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Right...a double pump will take half the time as compared to a single pump.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: And that was my other question. Do you do one side and then the other or for time’s sake, do you do both at once? What’s going to yield a better yield of milk?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well, you can do either one. And some mothers actually feel very strongly not to double pump.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: Really.

Nancy Mohrbacher: They have strong opinions about that. But most mothers I think are happy to double pump because it is such a huge time saver and there are some studies that indicate it may be better at keeping up milk supply. So it would be usually 10 to 15 minutes with a double pump as compared to 20 to 30 minutes with a single pump. So that’s a plus. A mother who’s working full time would probably be best served to get a pump that gives her between 30 and 60 automatic suction-and-release cycles per minute. It’s very close to what a baby does when they’re actively breastfeeding. So that’s a way to stimulate the breasts well and hopefully to drain the breasts well. As we

said, drained breasts make milk faster and full breasts make milk slower. Making the most of each pumping really helps to drain the breasts and keep up the milk supply. So that’s another thing that would be a good method by which to express the milk and for most moms, that’s going to be a good breast pump. And then also a mother needs to figure out when she can pump.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: And I understand that many states today actually have laws that say that employers of a certain size or bigger have to make reasonable efforts to allow all nursing mothers a time and a place that they’re able to pump.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Some places do have that available, but it doesn’t necessarily mean it’s paid time. Mothers can take unpaid break time to do their pumpings, so figuring out how to fit that into their work day is going to be important. And also to plan for where to store their milk. Most mothers prefer to store it somewhere where they have more control over it. Some do use a central refrigerator, but most mothers prefer to have it more under their own control. Many of the good breast pumps come with cooling compartments and, for example, our Purely Yours comes with one and it says the milk is good for 10 hours if they start the day with their freezer packs frozen. Those are all things that need to be considered when they’re planning to go back to work.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: Oftentimes mothers are given 4 to 6 weeks or 8 to 12 if they’re lucky, to take off after the birth of their baby. What should a mother do to build up a stash of stored milk and when should she begin working on building up that stored supply?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well that time when a mother’s home with her baby is a very important time in terms of setting her milk supply at the level where it needs to be. And we talked a little bit in the “Milk Supply” podcast about those first 5 to 6 weeks as being a critical time for establishing a good milk supply. So I really discourage mothers from doing much in the way of pumping or bottle feeding or scheduling their time during that time so the baby really has a chance to set a good milk supply with very frequent breastfeedings. Some mothers wonder should they be putting their babies on the schedule when they’re home that they’ll be on when they go back to work. And I don’t think that’s really a very good idea, because what you really want to do during that time is first of all to relax and enjoy your baby. And that makes it hard to do that. But also you want to take maximum advantage of that full breastfeeding time to really get the supply where it needs to be. There’s plenty of time for that once the mother goes back to work. I think probably a good strategy as far as starting to express milk is about 3 to 4 weeks before she goes back to work to begin to start to get practiced with whatever breast pump she has and start to store up milk. She could expect at that point if she’s pumping,

let’s say a half an hour to an hour after a regular breastfeeding, to maybe get about half a feeding and she can combine those batches into a full feeding for when she goes back to work.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: Sometimes mothers are encouraged to start the baby on a bottle early. Do you know what I mean?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Mmm-hmm.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: So that once you go back to work the baby’s accustomed to having a bottle. I’ve also heard and read many other people say that that’s not a great idea...that you should maximize that mother and baby time and not worry so much about baby taking a bottle until it’s really necessary. What do you recommend?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well, I had an interesting thing happen once that really gave me a whole new perspective on bottles. And that was I was working with a mother who was going back to work at the Federal Reserve Bank and at the same time that she had her baby, she had a co-worker who also had a baby. And her co-worker’s baby was bottle fed from birth. And what happened was the mother I was working with, who was breastfeeding, actually had a very smooth transition back to work, but she told me the story of her co-worker and her baby. And what she told me was when her co-worker went back to work at six weeks, having bottle fed for those six weeks, her baby refused a bottle for the whole first week that she was at daycare.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: Oh and that can be treacherous for somebody six weeks old to not have anything by mouth for 8 or 9 hours.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well, it certainly is very stressful for both mother and baby, but it really changed my way of thinking about that. Because what I realized was that there’s a lot more going on there than what bottle, what nipple, when was it started...I know a lot of mothers beat themselves up because--if their baby begins to balk at the bottle. They think “Oh if only I had started it early.” “If only I had given it more times.” But clearly this bottle-feeding mother’s story tells us there’s a lot more going on there than just how the mother planned it and how she executed it. What—I mean the way I interpret that story is that that baby took one look at the caregiver, who was a complete stranger and said...

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: You’re not mama!

Nancy Mohrbacher: Right! I only do this with my mother. And it took a while for the baby to get to know the caregiver and finally be willing to accept a feeding from her. So actually, it was my mentor’s mentor who recommended that mothers arrange for the baby to spend a little bit of time with the caregiver before going back to work and have the caregiver be the one to introduce the bottle because that would be part of their relationship.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: And so that’s the key then. It’s not just this kind of bottle, that kind of bottle, at this age. It’s also just the whole transition to a different caregiver.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Right. It’s all part of...it’s a relationship. I think a lot of people think of a bottle more as a thing. But we have to remember that feeding really is about a relationship between the baby and whoever’s feeding the baby. Whether it’s breastfeeding or whether it’s bottle feeding. And so I think that is a really good idea to arrange for the baby to spend time with the caregiver. What the research actually shows us about bottles is it doesn’t really seem to matter when you introduce a bottle. About 70% of babies take a bottle just fine whether it’s introduced at 1 month, 2-3 months, or even 3-6 months.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: But not really recommended to introduce a bottle before that age.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Right. What we in breastfeeding normally say is that it’s a good idea to let the baby get really practiced at breastfeeding before introducing a bottle. So we would say probably at least 3-4 weeks. Some people would say 4-6 weeks. And then the baby gets really good at breastfeeding and then there’s less likely to be the problem of the baby refusing the breast after being given the bottle. I think for a mother who’s back at work, even more important than that, is that trying to limit the bottles to the caregiver and the breast to the mother because I think babies are very smart and they can figure out that they do this with the mom and they do this with someone else. But sometimes if the mom is also giving lots of bottles, that’s when you start to see babies who have a little trouble and start to refuse the breast.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: I see. And that makes perfect sense, but I guess I hadn’t really heard it said like that. So wait 3 or 4 weeks...

Nancy Mohrbacher: Three to four weeks is pretty safe and as we talked about in the “Breast Pumping” podcast, if a mother needs to pump during that time, because she’s uncomfortably full, that’s not a problem. I think that’s a fine use for a breast pump in the

early weeks. But certainly she could save that milk; freeze it or whatever and use it later. But as far as introducing the bottle, I think that there are some good reasons to wait until a baby's about 3-4 weeks old.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: Yeah, definitely. So what else can you think about that's important to consider as you make your plans to go back to work? Is there any particular recommendation of a certain kind of bottle or how much milk ought to be the ideal feeding size for the baby?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well, I think knowing—having a general idea of feeding size is a really good thing for a mom. One of the things I often talk to mothers about who are back at work is how much milk their baby's taking when they're away. And how much they're leaving. Because we know from our research that babies on average, once they're a month old, between one month and six months, generally take about 30 ounces a day. If you're used to milliliters, that would be about 900 milliliters a day. It ranges somewhere between 25 and 35 ounces, or 750 and 1050 milliliters. And so that actually gives us some good information for a mom going back to work. Because sometimes I get calls and the mother says “My baby is taking more milk than I'm leaving at daycare.” And sometimes you find out that it's because truly the mother's not leaving enough or isn't pumping enough. But sometimes it's because the baby is taking way more than you would ever really expect the baby to take. Like, for example, if the baby's at daycare for 8 hours that's 1/3 of a 24-hour day. And if 30 ounces is average, you would expect a baby to take around 10 ounces, using round numbers there. But if the baby's taking 20 ounces instead of 10 ounces, then it's time to look to see what's going on.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: This makes me think a lot of the problems we have as adult Americans in the portion sizes sometimes being different from what's available in the whole package. The soda pop I like to buy at the convenience store is a 20 ounce bottle, but that's actually way more than I need in a single serve-- well, I don't really need any soda pop at all --- but that's like two servings worth. But it's so easy because it's a single bottle to just have the whole thing.

Nancy Mohrbacher: There can be any number of reasons why a baby might take twice what you would expect. For example, one mother I talked to recently, it was because of the way that she was managing her daily routine. Instead of breastfeeding the baby just before she left in the morning for work, she was leaving a bottle. And then, they were giving a large bottle just before she returned in the evening, instead of trying to give the baby a little bit and holding the baby off until she got in. So as we talked about her daily routine and what was happening, there were two very large bottles, two 5-ounce bottles, that were being given that could have been avoided if she instead had made the time to

sit down and breastfeed before she left and instructed the caregiver just to give an ounce or two until she got there and then breastfed when she got there. So sometimes it's a routine issue. Sometimes it's because the caregiver, rather than interacting with the baby, is trying to use food to keep the baby happy. So sometimes it's overfeeding. Sometimes it's that there's too much in the bottle.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: I know that you can combine milk from several pumpings into a single thing. How much would be good to have in a single bottle?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well most babies who are breastfeeding are taking 3-4 ounces from the breast at a feeding. I think that's a real good place to start. Ideally a mother will be storing her milk in amounts that are no more than her baby might take. If she has milk left over after a feeding, then usually that's discarded. So obviously...

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: You don't want to throw out liquid gold.

Nancy Mohrbacher: No. When a mother works that hard to get it, the last thing she wants is to see it go down the drain. So it can help to try to adjust the amount in the storage container, whether it's a bag or a bottle, to closer to what the baby's taking. What that might mean is storing 3-ounce amounts and then having a couple of one ounces. So if the baby wants a little more that they can add to it. Because you can always add to it, but you can't keep what's left.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: You were talking earlier about the size of a new baby's tummy and I think that bears repeating in this podcast as well, because that really helped me see that you don't necessarily need to give a child a pint of breast milk at a sitting, because their tummy can't possibly accommodate that.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Right. We talked about how the size of the stomach impacts the mother's milk supply in the early weeks. Because sometimes mothers start pumping early on and they're disappointed at the amount they're getting. But a baby in the first week, like after the fourth day or so and after the mother's milk has increased, typically a feeding is only 1 ounce or 2 ounces. By the second or third week, typically babies are taking a little more; more like 2-3 ounces. By the time they're a month old, it's more like 3-4 ounces. So when a mother's pumping during that time, how much she gets is going to vary because she's not really at a full milk supply until her baby's about a month or 4 or 5 weeks or so. But you're right...early on the amount the mother's producing corresponds to the size of the baby's stomach and at birth babies stomachs are about the size of a marble. By 3 days it's more like a ping pong ball and by about 10 days, it's

more like the size of a large chicken egg. So that will obviously determine in part how much a baby can take at an individual feeding.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: And then does their intake kind of level off? How long until their appetite makes a huge jump?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well that's important too. Because a lot of moms feel despair when they go back to work because they think as their baby gets older and heavier that they're going to need more milk. And actually what's true, and this was a surprise to all the researchers when this first came out, was that from about 4-5 weeks until about 6 months, babies who are breastfed actually take about the same amount of milk. There isn't a big increase, even though they're getting bigger and heavier during that time. Now that is not true of babies on formula. So if you look at babies on formula at 6 months, you find that they're actually taking, on average, about 22% more milk than babies on human milk. And at first when the researchers found this, they thought there was something wrong with the studies. But they kept being replicated over and over and finding the same thing. So you can't really use what you know about babies who are bottle fed formula and apply it directly to breastfeeding, because it's not the same.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: Well that's nice to know that you aren't in a vicious cycle where you're going to have to pump more and more and more to get ever larger amounts.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Right. For a mother who's doing a lot of pumping, I think they find this immensely reassuring because this is a sort of a hidden worry that a lot of mothers have. Whether they're exclusively pumping for a premature baby or whether they're going back to work and having to express milk for their babies is that they're going to have to continue to increase the amount. But once they're at a full milk supply, which usually happens at around 4-5 weeks, really that's the most amount of milk they'll ever need. And what happens at 6 months when their babies start taking solid foods, is actually their baby starts to need less milk. So solids take the place of mother's milk in a baby's diet. So then things get a little bit easier for them and most mothers who are working usually are finished pumping by the time their baby's about a year old. Because a baby at a year can then be taking cow's milk from the store and so they don't really need to be pumping at work. But they can still continue to breastfeed at home if they would like.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: What are some of the continued benefits of breastfeeding past that point when baby starts to take solids and if baby's really lucky, on into that second year of life?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well, what’s recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics is a minimum of one year of breastfeeding. And the reason that they have recommended that is because many of the studies that look at lifelong health have found a difference in health outcomes when babies are breastfed for less than one year and for more than one year. And for mother’s who are working, it can be a challenge because it’s not always easy to find time in their workday and they sometimes feel isolated because when other people are getting together and socializing, they’re off using their breast pump. So mothers are often very concerned about how long they have to keep this up. So I find, of the mothers I talk to, most of them have stopped pumping sometime between 9 months and a year. Even those who are really devoted to making sure their baby only gets their milk. So I think it’s good to know that it is temporary and that it does end.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: What are some of the things that mothers talk with you about? I know you get lots and lots of calls from moms who are using Ameda pumps or are interested in finding out about working and breastfeeding. What are some gentle ways that you can help reassure a hesitant employer that pumping on the job is an okay thing? I think an employer wouldn’t flat out tell you no, but they might feel some discomfort or balk at the idea that they have to make costly arrangements.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well, we’re lucky here at Ameda, because we do have a lactation room here and employees are encouraged to use it to further their breastfeeding goals. But some employers are not so knowledgeable about breastfeeding and there are some studies out there that have found that actually it’s not just good for mothers and babies. We know that. But it’s also good for businesses. For example, businesses that provide lactation support have found that every dollar that they spend on breastfeeding they actually recoup three dollars. So they actually come out ahead, because mothers tend to take fewer sick days. They tend to retain employees more and it’s a huge cost for employers to have to replace an employee.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: It can take years to bring somebody up to speed if you had a really well-trained employee.

Nancy Mohrbacher: That’s right. And also they found that they had reduced healthcare costs both for mothers and babies. So all the things that we already know about the effects of breastfeeding on health, translate into good bottom line dollars for employers.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: So for that mom with a new baby who’s coming back to work after a time away, what are some tips that can help ease that transition back into the workplace?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well, it's a very vulnerable time for many mothers and for their babies when it's time to leave them with the caregiver and return to work and there are some strategies that can make it a little bit easier. For example, if a mother's coming back to work full time, maybe she could start by coming back part time for a short period. Or if she can't do that, one opportunity would be to maybe start back on a Thursday or a Friday so that her first week back is a short week. Just as she's kind of getting her feet wet with all the new routine and such and that could make it a little bit easier for her and her baby.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: That sounds really good. In speaking with all the mothers that you do, what would be some really important points not to leave out?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well, I would say although sleeping through the night sounds very good, that when a mother is working and breastfeeding, having that ability to breastfeed at night can really make the difference between a mother who has a gradually reducing milk supply and one who's able to keep it up long term. We've repeated a number of times that drained breasts make milk faster and full breasts make milk slower, but you know it really does make a difference when that number of breastfeedings over a 24-hour day stays steady and can even increase during those times when a mother's supply starts to flag. So finding ways to breastfeed at night and still get their rest I think is a really good thing to look at. I mean some parents do this in a number of different ways. Some parents use co-sleeper beds so the baby is close by. That makes it easy to get their rest and to feed. Learning to breastfeed lying down so that when they're home, even on the weekends, they can nap and feed at the same time. There's lots of different ways to look at that, but I think frequent breastfeeding when they're with their baby is a really critical part of keeping up milk supply long term.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: And that's something wonderful to encourage parents to get rest and meet the needs of the baby at the same time.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Right, it shouldn't have to be a choice, hopefully.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: Yeah and I guess that sort of underscores another point and that's to encourage new parents to not be Superman and Superwoman. But no one who's ever had a child is going to fault them for letting the laundry go for an extra day, or to not have Martha Stewart quality, wonderful gourmet meals every night.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Absolutely.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: But that might be a good time in life to cut corners in other places too.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Yes, I would agree. I would agree. It's interesting, because when you look at studies of women who've returned to work and breastfed, there was one study with several hundred women and what was interesting to me in reading it, was how they felt about the experience afterwards. And many of them, almost all of them, said they would do it again. The ones who didn't said they would make different employment choices the next time. None of them said that they would not breastfeed the second time around. They all felt that that was really important to them and their babies. In fact, there's a wonderful new book that actually Le Leche League International has just published. It's called *Hirkani's Daughters*. Hirkani was evidently a legendary character in the Far East and she was a mother who went through many hurdles to breastfeed her baby and the book is a collection of stories of women from all over the world and all different employment settings and how they worked with breastfeeding and made it work for them and their families. So it's a good resource.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: It's a neat book too, because it talks about people in lots of jobs, not just high-power, managerial jobs...

Nancy Mohrbacher: Right, not just office work.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: ...but the lady who manages the ice cream shop, the lady who is on active military duty and all kinds of circumstances. I'm amazed at the creativity that some of those mothers used in order to make working and breastfeeding work for them and so that's great to know. Is there anything else that you would like to add that you think would be really important for parents to know? Or for employers to know?

Nancy Mohrbacher: One thing I would say to moms especially, is it's important to have other moms to talk to who've been there and who've been successful. A lot of moms who are considering going back to work don't know anyone who's actually made it happen. One good place to go would be to mother support groups. One way to find a mother support group in your area is to go to the website www.lalecheleague.org because I think it really helps to be in touch with mothers who have made it work. I think that's true for breastfeeding in general, but I think it's even more true for mothers who are going back to work, who are in that situation.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: I don't know about you, but I know when I had my first child, I was the first one in my circle of friends to have a baby. I didn't know anyone and it felt

like I'd landed on a whole new planet. It was a nice planet, but it wasn't one that I was familiar with at all.

Nancy Mohrbacher: Yeah, I was actually the first in three generations in my family to breastfeed, too, so I think that was really important to me. To be with other mothers and to-- cause you can get lots of very practical tips. I think sometimes the biggest hurdles with regard to breastfeeding is how to make something work in the course of your daily life and when you're with people who are doing it, then you can get lots of really good ideas to try. Not everyone's going to make the same choices, but it gives you lots of options you might not have thought of.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: And now if we're someone who loves someone who is working and breastfeeding, what's the best, easiest thing we can do to help them in that task?

Nancy Mohrbacher: Well, I think obviously providing lots of support at home and pitching in with whatever work is needed at home, because many mothers feel like they're working every hour they're awake, whether it's at their place of employment or whether it's at their home trying to keep their home fires burning. So I think that would be probably the most important thing.

Elisabeth McLaury Lewin: Cool. Well I think we can do that. Thank you very much Nancy.

Nancy Mohrbacher: You're welcome Elisabeth. Great to talk to you.