

## **Policy on Lactation & Milk Expression**

Effective 12/14/2018

Reaffirmed by GMEC 04/11/2025

Previous 07/08/2022; 01/13/2023

Milk expression is a physiologic need and should be anticipated as a routine aspect of returning to work after childbearing leave. McGaw supports trainees to meet this need without concern for retaliation or negative impact on clinical training and educational experience.

In alignment with ACGME common program requirements<sup>1</sup> and to encourage optimal trainee well-being, programs, in partnership with McGaw, must ensure clean and private facilities for expressing breast milk that have refrigeration capabilities, with proximity appropriate for safe patient care.

Program and Sponsor (McGaw) specific expectations are outlined below.

1. Facilities: Through partnership with each training site, McGaw will ensure lactation room(s) are available which meet the below requirements:
  - a. Private: The room must have a working lock to ensure privacy. This can be a dedicated lactation room or a private office space. Bathrooms and closets are not acceptable alternatives.
  - b. Comfortable: The room should be equipped with a chair, an electrical outlet, adequate lighting and kept at a comfortable temperature. A table or a flat surface should be available for placing breast pumps and supplies.
  - c. Sanitary: The room should be regularly cleaned and have easy access to a sink for washing hands and pump supplies.
  - d. Milk storage: A secure refrigerator for storing breast milk will be available in proximity to the lactation room. When possible, the refrigerator should be designated for milk storage only (and not used to store lunches/food).
  - e. Pump storage: A secure place for storage of pump parts should be easily accessible.
  - f. Proximity: Dedicated lactation rooms are available at each training site. However, rooms should be in close proximity to patient care. If the dedicated lactation space is not in close proximity (> 5-minute walk) from clinical sites, it is the program's responsibility, through collaboration with the base hospital's education office (for NMH this is Academic Affairs), to find alternate suitable space.
  - g. Trainees should not be expected to share lactation rooms with patients or hospital guests.
  - h. When possible, a computer workstation and phone should be available to allow trainees to continue their work while pumping, although they are not required to.
  - i. Trainees may be allowed to use wearable breast pumps during clinical duties at the discretion of the Program Director.

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<sup>1</sup> See 1.9.c. and 6.13.d.

2. Protected time:
  - a. Due to the demanding schedule of trainees, to ensure adequate coverage of clinical duties, trainees will need support from faculty, colleagues, staff, and administration. Programs must work with trainees to find coverage for clinical duties during trainees' milk expression breaks.
  - b. As described below, programs must allow for the minimum accommodation<sup>2</sup> for each rotation type.
    - i. Inpatient-procedural: one 30-minute break between cases every 2-4 hours.
    - ii. Inpatient-non-procedural: one 30-minute break free from direct patient care responsibilities every 2-4 hours.
    - iii. Ambulatory: one 30-minute break each half day clinic session.
    - iv. Didactics: Ability to leave didactics for 30-minute break every 2-4 hours as needed, with option to join remotely if desired.
    - v. Research: one 30-minute break every 2-4 hours as needed, with option to join remotely if desired.
  - c. If trainees need additional time beyond what is prescribed above, they should contact their Program Director.
3. Program responsibilities: McGaw expects each program to abide by the Lactation & Milk Expression Policy. In addition, programs should:
  - a. Designate a faculty contact, usually the Program Director or Assistant Program Director, to provide proactive outreach to:
    - vi. Provide resources prior to parental leave including locations of lactation rooms near clinical duties and plans for coverage of clinical duties upon return.
    - vii. Communicate clear support for the trainee and create a culture of support among colleagues, non-faculty and faculty staff, and program directors. A culture of support can be developed and promoted through regular education of staff on the benefits of breast milk and raising awareness of McGaw and hospital policies supporting milk expression through new staff orientation, annual trainings, and promotion on the department website. Lactation resources should also be provided to potential new trainees.
    - viii. Feedback should be solicited and channels for addressing barriers should be available. Trainees should be encouraged to reach out to McGaw leadership (<https://www.mcgaw.northwestern.edu/about/contact.html>) or utilize the McGaw anonymous feedback portal if any concerns arise.
4. Notification to supervisors about lactation accommodations: Trainees can contact clinical supervisors / rotation directors or the designated program point person, usually the Program Director or Assistant Program Director, to provide notice of their use of break time for milk expression.
5. Duration of milk expression breaks: Milk expression breaks are available for each trainee until one year after childbirth. After that time, trainees may request a reasonable accommodation with program leadership or McGaw leadership.

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<sup>2</sup> Break times should be adjusted if the lactation facility is more than five minutes away.

6. Additional accommodations: Trainees who require additional schedule modifications or other accommodations after returning from parental leave can request a reasonable accommodation by contacting McGaw leadership.