

DCS, G-1

Army Policy for Breastfeeding and Lactation Support

**Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS)
December Quarterly Business Meeting**

December 2018

- a. Describe your Services' breastfeeding policy and state when it was last updated:

Army Directive (AD) 2015-43 established the Army's breastfeeding and lactation support policy in October 2015. The AD will be rescinded upon the publication of the current draft of Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, Army Command Policy. The draft of AR 600-20 includes the information in AD 2015-43 with no substantive changes or updates.

The policy includes:

Commanders will designate a private space, other than a restroom, with locking capabilities for a Soldier to breastfeed or express milk. This space must include a place to sit, a flat surface (other than the floor) to place the pump on, an electrical outlet, and access to a safe water source within reasonable distance from the lactation space. Commanders will ensure that Soldiers have adequate time to express milk but must be aware that each Soldier's situation is unique. Commanders will provide reasonable lactation breaks for Soldiers for at least 1 year after the child's birth.

b. Describe the methodology that was used to design this policy (e.g., supporting medical research):

- Extensive medical research has documented that breastfeeding has significant health, nutritional, immunologic, developmental, emotional, social, and economic benefits for both mother and child.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that breastfeeding can help lower the mother's risk of Heart Disease, Type 2 Diabetes, Ovarian Cancer and Breast Cancer.
- AD 2015-43, draft AR 600-20 and the 2016 NDAA (Sec. 524) include a requirement for the Army to have a designated room or area that provides the service member with adequate privacy and cleanliness and includes an electrical outlet to facilitate the use of a breast pump.

c. What programs exist to support lactation in the workplace?

Army Lactation support personnel at military treatment facilities (MTF) or through Tri-Care are available to help Soldiers develop individualized plans. MTFs and Tri-Care also provides lactation equipment to Soldiers free of charge.

d. Does your Service provide servicewomen a shipping subsidy to assist with the transportation of breastmilk back to their child while they are TAD/TDY?

- No Army shipping subsidy is available at this time.
- Soldiers who are breastfeeding or expressing milk remain eligible for field training, mobility exercises, and deployment (after completing their postpartum deployment deferment period).
- During field training and mobility exercises, commanders will provide private space for Soldiers to express milk. If the Soldier (or designated personnel) cannot transport expressed milk to garrison, the Soldier's commander will permit her the same time and space to express and discard her breast milk with the intent to maintain physiological capability for lactation.
- Commanders should work with the supporting medical officer to determine whether milk storage and/or transportation will be feasible during the exercise.
- Commanders will counsel Soldiers to discuss the potential risks/benefits of storing milk during field training and mobility exercises with their medical provider

e. How does your Service ensure units adhere to the policy (e.g., time and a clean lactation space)?

Army Commanders are responsible for counseling Soldiers on the lactation policy, designating appropriate lactation facilities, and ensuring that Soldiers have adequate time and flexible work patterns for lactation activities during the duty day for the duration of the Soldier's lactation activities, up to a year after the birth of a child

f. In terms of postpartum physical fitness testing, what methodology was used to design this policy? Does the timeline support breastfeeding mothers (e.g., the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a baby's life, followed by breastfeeding in combination with the introduction of complementary foods until at least 12 months of age)?

- The Army Pregnancy/Postpartum Fitness Physical Training (PPPT) Program is designed to maintain health and fitness levels of pregnant Soldiers and assist them in returning to pre-pregnancy fitness levels. *See Research on Exercise for Lactating Moms slide*
- Army leaders are required to provide the necessary time and support to female Soldiers who decide to breastfeed their babies or express breast milk following maternity leave. The Army recognizes breastfeeding is beneficial to mother and baby as both experience the positive health benefits and may result in Soldiers' decreased absenteeism from duty. Breastfeeding may also support Soldier readiness by burning as many as 500 extra calories each day which may assist with goals to return to pre-pregnancy weight.
- *See Pregnancy in AR350-1 slide:* Following the convalescent leave period, Soldiers are required to participate in the installation PPPT program for up to 180 days after pregnancy termination. Following the PPPT program, Soldiers return to their unit's physical readiness training. *See Research on Exercise for Lactating Moms slide.*

- Light to moderate physical activity is safe and beneficial for breastfeeding moms, plus it does not affect the amount, taste, or composition of your breast milk. A study done by Catherine Cram, "an exercise regimen did not noticeably affect infant nursing behavior suggesting that the lactic acid content of breast milk was not great enough to cause an unpleasant taste." Exercising Through Your Pregnancy, 2nd edition, 2012, James Clapp and Catherine Cram, Chapter 9, Exercise Effects on Breastfeeding and Infant Growth pgs 186-189.
- A very detailed explanation of the effects of exercise on breastmilk composition is in 'Women's Fitness Program Development' by Ann Cowlin, 2002, pages 237-238. The bottom line is " although lactic acid was significantly elevated through 90 minutes post exercise following a maximum-intensity treadmill session, there is no significant increase following sessions at 50-75% VO2 Max, nor were there any significant differences in the other measures at any level of intensity."
- It stimulates the release of endorphins, those feel-good hormones that help chase away the baby blues, boost your mood, and make you feel happy. Effects of Exercise and Physical Activity on Anxiety, April 2013, Frontiers in Psychiatry.
- It raises your body's level of prolactin, the hormone responsible for breast milk production. Influences of Exercise and Training on the Circulating Concentration of Prolactin in Humans, Dec 2011 Journal of Neuroendocrinology.

Army Regulation 350-1, Army Training and Leader Development, Chapter G-9, para f.

Soldiers who are pregnant or who are recovering from childbirth are exempt from regular unit physical readiness training and APFT testing for the duration of the pregnancy and 180 days past pregnancy termination.

(1) Pregnant and postpartum Soldiers must be cleared by their health care provider prior to participating in any physical fitness training program.

(2) Prior to the commencement of postpartum convalescent leave, Soldiers will be issued a temporary profile for 45 days which begins on the day of pregnancy termination to allow physical training at the Soldier's own pace.

(3) Soldiers are encouraged to use the At-Home component of the Army PPPT program while on convalescent leave. Following the convalescent leave period, Soldiers are required to participate in the installation PPPT program for up to 180 days after pregnancy termination.

(4) Postpartum Soldiers must receive health care provider clearance if returning to their unit's physical readiness training prior to 180 days following pregnancy termination.

A Challenge For Military Moms: Breastfeeding And Pumping On Duty

By [CARSON FRAME](#) • OCT 3, 2018 North Carolina Public Radio *Carson Frame reports on the breastfeeding challenges that military moms often face.*

- Broadcast highlighted challenges and positive steps forward.
- Each military branch has its own breastfeeding policies, and they are open to interpretation.
- In the absence of clear policy and policy enforcement, it's up to commanders and supervisors to accommodate female service members as they see fit.
- In addition to dedicated lactation rooms and longer maternity leave, the Services also approved a shirt that makes it easier for women to nurse and pump in different environments.
- Tricare, the military's health plan, began paying for breast pumps and supplies in 2014.