

City of Dubuque Leisure Services Division Swimming Pool Policy on Breastfeeding

QUESTION:

Can a mother breastfeed her child in a public swimming pool or the swimming pool (deck) area?

BACKGROUND REGARDING BREASTFEEDING:

The City of Dubuque promotes breastfeeding as the health benefits are significant for both babies and mothers.¹

The Iowa Legislature enacted §135.30A in 2000 which states:

“Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, a woman may breast-feed the woman’s own child in any public place where the woman’s presence is otherwise authorized.”

POLICY:

In compliance with the law, a woman may breastfeed a child at public swimming pools.

INTERPRETATION:

1. **The City allows breastfeeding in a public swimming pool or deck area at the mother’s discretion.** Any other food or drink is prohibited in the pool, including *bottles of breast milk, infant formula, or milk*.
2. **The City allows bottle feeding of breast milk, infant formula, or milk to babies and small children in the pool deck area, but not in the pool . The bottle cannot be glass or plastic that will shatter.** In the event of a spillage, the pool operator or manager should be notified so the area can be kept clean. Only breast milk, infant formula, or milk is allowed.

POOL OPERATIONS PROCEDURE:

The City will review breastfeeding laws with all pool staff so they are knowledgeable about the law and the issues that may come up. Pool staff will be informed on how to respond to complaints. All staff will know which supervisor is responsible for responding to complaints so that information can be related to patrons. This subject matter has the potential to be embarrassing to some staff and patrons so discussing the policy of the pool during staff trainings and meetings, even role playing, will help staff to feel more comfortable dealing with the topic and providing this information to the public.

¹ <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calls/breastfeeding/factsheet.html> and <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calls/breastfeeding/calltoactiontosupportbreastfeeding.pdf>

- a. **Breastfeeding a child is acceptable (by law) in the swimming pool and swimming pool (deck) area.**
- b. **Do not ask a breastfeeding mother to move, cover up, be more discreet, or refrain from breastfeeding.** If another bather complains, consider this an opportunity to share information about the law with the person complaining.

BACKGROUND REGARDING SWIMMING POOL REGULATIONS:

For safety reasons the City has posted rules including the prohibition of carry-in food and beverages and the required use of designated concession areas for consumption of food and beverages. Glass or plastics that will shatter are also prohibited. The City is not unusual in having rules to address the consumption of food and drink in pool areas. These rules do not apply to breastfeeding a child.