



# Pregnancy (employee handout)

Updated 05 February 2020

## Employee handout: All female employees of childbearing age

We (the employer) have a duty to ensure that all our employees have a safe working environment; we have additional duties of care for female employees who are pregnant, have recently given birth or who are breast feeding.

If you have given birth within the last 6 months and/or you are breast feeding you must inform the Deputy Head.

Whilst there is no statutory need for you to give us details of your pregnancy until 15 weeks before the baby is due, it would enable us to support you better if you were to inform the Deputy Head who will keep this information confidential if you so wish. We reiterate that there is no statutory requirement for you to do this.

Pregnancy is not an illness and will not be treated as such. However, certain work activities may have adverse health effects on new and expectant mothers. Pregnancy may also put a strain on the body which may increase the risks to a worker's health and safety.

It will also help us understand should you be subject to something like "morning sickness" which usually occurs before the 25th week of pregnancy by when you should give us notice of your pregnancy.

In any circumstance, you must inform us that you are pregnant at least 15 weeks before the baby is due (around 25 weeks pregnant).

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR) require that we, as employers, carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments when considering the health and safety of all employees at work. However, there are more specific regulations that need to be taken into account for new or expectant mothers.

Regulation 16 stipulates the requirement of a risk assessment to be carried out of the risks to the health and safety of pregnant workers, those who have recently given birth, ie during the past six months, or those who are breastfeeding.



Legislation protecting you as a new or expectant mother only applies once we the employer has been informed of the pregnancy.

This is important as pregnant women and nursing mothers undergo many physiological, hormonal and psychological changes during the term of their pregnancy, and during the postnatal nursing period, both of which might affect the level of risk associated with your work.

### Carrying out the risk assessment

The MHSWR require us, as employers, to carry out an assessment of the specific risks posed to the health and safety of pregnant women and new mothers in the workplace, and then to take steps to ensure that those risks are avoided.

Working with children can, of course, also pose a risk as children develop infections and contagious diseases. If you believe that a child is infectious please inform the Deputy Head immediately.

### A word of advice

It is essential that you take care of your health.

All employees have ready access to drinking water and it is particularly important to expectant and new mothers to be able to take meal breaks — and rest periods if necessary.

You will be allowed reasonable time off with pay to attend ante-natal care.

You may wish to take a holiday before the birth of your child. Whilst there is probably no risk to infrequent passengers from the low partial pressure of oxygen within the aircraft, should you elect to fly in advanced pregnancy we recommend that you discuss this with your doctor.

### Further information

Further information is available from the Department of Health ([www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)), National Childbirth Trust ([www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk)) and Emma's diary (Royal College of General Practitioners) ([www.emmasdiary.co.uk](http://www.emmasdiary.co.uk)).