
Statement

The University of Dundee will support the health, safety and welfare needs of employees through pregnancy and breast feeding. It will provide expectant and new birth parents with relevant information about additional risks arising from their condition and, through risk assessment, will modify working procedures as necessary.

Information about maternity leave and pay issues can be found on Human Resources and Organisational Development Directorate web pages.

Arrangements

Employees should notify their line manager at their earliest convenience that they are pregnant so that the risk assessment for their work can be reviewed. This assessment addresses all the risks faced by staff irrespective of their gender or age and so it is extremely unlikely that working procedures will have to be modified in the early stages of pregnancy.

Employees should read the health and safety information provided as part of the induction pack they received when they were appointed. This information is given below.

Line Managers should review the risk assessment and, as part of this review, should consider the additional risks arising from pregnancy and breast feeding. A risk assessment form and guidance are given below. The risk assessment must be kept under active review throughout the pregnancy. It is essential that the risk assessment is discussed fully with the employee and reasons for not changing duties upon request fully explained. Mental well-being issues should be given priority to prevent anxiety and the potential for a stress related illness leading to absence. The Occupational Health Service or
Safety Services can be contacted for advice if there are unusual or difficult issues to address.

Deans/Directors must ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out. In some cases suitable and sufficient may mean that minor changes in working procedures are inadequate to reduce risk and that the employee should be offered alternative work or suspended on full pay. Human Resources and Organisational Development Directorate should be contacted for advice in these cases.
Guidance on Risk Assessment

It is essential to involve the pregnant employee when carrying out the risk assessment and to discuss the findings with them. The risk assessment should be reviewed regularly with them, both informally and formally. A risk assessment form can be found below. When reviewing the work activities of a pregnant employee for health and safety risks the common symptoms listed in the table below should be considered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common symptoms in pregnancy</th>
<th>Factors in work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning sickness</td>
<td>Early shift work/unpleasant smells</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to odours</td>
<td>Exposure to nauseating smells, poor ventilation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Backache</td>
<td>Standing, manual handling, posture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicose veins</td>
<td>Standing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haemorrhoids (piles)</td>
<td>Working in hot conditions, sitting too long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent visits to toilet</td>
<td>Difficulty in leaving job, site of work, location of toilets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing size</td>
<td>Use of protective clothing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work in confined areas, working at desk or bench</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manual handling, driving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiredness</td>
<td>Overtime, evening work, travelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>Working on slippery surfaces, steps, at height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling hot</td>
<td>Hot workplaces, poor ventilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General discomfort</td>
<td>Working in constricted workplaces or small rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Work with hazardous substances, ionising and non-ionising radiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dexterity, agility, co-ordination, speed of movement and reach may be impaired because of increasing size</td>
<td>Handling tasks, carrying things</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, for some jobs the following specific issues may need careful consideration:

1. Lifting, carrying or moving heavy items (manual handling)
Physical and postural changes during and after pregnancy render staff more susceptible to strain injuries if carrying out heavy work. Manual handling activities they are required to undertake should be carefully reviewed to avoid the risk of injury. Changes in balance, agility, reach and co-ordination may also increase the risk of accidents if carrying loads or handling.

2. Working with personal computers
Radiation from monitors does not cause harm in pregnancy. Workstations may need to be adjusted for user comfort as abdominal size increases and there should be sufficient space at the workstation for the comfort of the employee at all stages of pregnancy. More frequent rest breaks and changes of activity may be required and additional back supports or other items provided to improve their comfort at the workstation.

3. Extremes of temperature
In pregnancy employees may be more sensitive to heat and may feel unwell or faint if working in high temperatures. Their work should be arranged to avoid this stress and in unusually warm weather given the opportunity to take breaks from work.
No pregnancy-related problems are known relating to working in cold conditions, but if any work has to be done in cold temperatures warm clothing should be provided as a matter of course.

4. Working Conditions
Prolonged standing at work during pregnancy increases fatigue and may increase the likelihood of varicose veins. Work should be adjusted to allow the work to be done seated.
Working at height may cause difficulties and should be avoided especially in the later stages of pregnancy when balance and posture are more affected.

5. Night Work
Pregnant night workers may be able to get a certificate from a GP or midwife stating that night work could be harmful to the individual’s health. This certificate makes it compulsory to stop the employee from working at night and either offer daytime employment or suspension on full pay. Therefore, night working should be discussed fully with the employee, in the expectation that it will be avoided if possible.

6. Dealing with demanding/difficult people
New or expectant mothers may find it more difficult to deal with demanding/difficult people since hormonal changes during pregnancy and breast feeding and concerns about the pregnancy can cause them to be more easily upset by minor stresses that they would normally cope with. If they appear to be often upset or stressed by this type of work then they should be given more support, and possibly offered alternative work.

7. Ionising Radiation
Employees have a duty under the Ionising Radiations Regulations 2017 to notify the employer as soon as they are pregnant or if they are breast feeding.

There is a prescriptive limit under the Regulations for the exposure of pregnant employee of 1 mSv during the course of the pregnancy or as an annual dose limit if breast feeding. Keeping below the allowable exposure limit can be readily achieved if working with some isotopes of low energy, but the employee should be kept away from high energy isotopes and particular attention paid to avoiding risks of contamination. The activities of other workers in the area also need to be considered in ensuring the safety of the pregnant worker and this may favour withdrawing her from areas where such work is carried out.
Radio-iodines are particularly hazardous because they are concentrated in the thyroid if they enter the body and do the same in the forming thyroid of a foetus. However, if Local Rules are followed there is rarely a need to prevent a pregnant woman carrying out radio-immunoassays.

For further details on Ionising Radiations in pregnancy and breast feeding please see University of Dundee Code of Practice “Protection against Ionising Radiations” 2016, appendices B and E.

Contact Safety Services or Occupational Health Service for advice on risk assessments if you have any concerns.

8. Non-ionising electromagnetic radiations
Optical radiation, electromagnetic fields and radio frequency waves are not thought to be harmful to mother or foetus within the limits recommended by the Health Protection Agency. Unless the pregnant employee is working with or near specialised equipment associated with high levels of such energies there is no reason for concern. The small quantities of radiations received when working with monitors and TV sets are not considered hazardous.

9. Noise and whole body vibration
There is some evidence that prolonged exposure of the unborn child to loud noise, especially at low frequency, may have an effect on the child’s hearing. There is limited and conflicting information on birth weight and prematurity. The use of hearing protection by the mother will not protect the unborn child so pregnant employees should not have daily or weekly personal noise exposures above 85dB(A).

Long term exposure to whole body vibration (e.g. driving tractors and off road vehicles) may increase the risk of premature birth of low birth weight.

10. Biological Hazards
Although pregnant employees are not usually more susceptible to infection, the consequences of infection or contact with some biological agents can be
severe during pregnancy and breast feeding. Some infections, such as Rubella, pass across the placenta and harm the foetus and others can be transmitted through breast milk. The table below details organisms known to be hazardous in pregnancy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro-organism</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Additional Control Measures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chlamydia spp</td>
<td>Birds, sheep during lambing</td>
<td>Avoid contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cytomegalovirus</td>
<td>Humans, especially children</td>
<td>Scrupulous personal hygiene</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A</td>
<td>Water or food contaminated with human faeces</td>
<td>Scrupulous personal hygiene, vaccination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B, C and D</td>
<td>Human blood and body fluids</td>
<td>Hepatitis B vaccination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV 1 and 2</td>
<td>Human blood and body fluids</td>
<td>Protection of damaged skin, gloves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listeria monocytogenes</td>
<td>Contaminated food, infected animals, silage</td>
<td>Scrupulous personal hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parvovirus</td>
<td>Human respiratory secretions</td>
<td>Scrupulous personal hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubella</td>
<td>Human respiratory secretions and close contact</td>
<td>Vaccination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toxoplasma gondii</td>
<td>Infected cat faeces, contaminated soil.</td>
<td>Avoid handling cat faeces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicella-zoster</td>
<td>Humans by direct contact</td>
<td>Check for immunity, if lacking, avoid contact with infected individuals</td>
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</table>

Work activities which are known to present increased hazards are:
(a) culturing micro-organisms, particularly from unknown sources
(b) handling water or food contaminated by animal or human faeces
(c) working with infected animals and birds
(d) handling human blood, tissues and body fluids.
(e) working with lambing ewes
In any work area it is necessary to consider the risks that may be posed by the activities of other people even if the pregnant or breast-feeding employee is taking scrupulous precautions. The assessment needs to consider:

(a) known biological hazards in the workplace
(b) likelihood of unknown hazards being present
(c) routes of infection (e.g. ingestion, inhalation, percutaneous, eye contamination)
(d) existing control measures for all workers
(e) availability of additional effective control measures to reduce the risk to the individual
(f) any history of infections or dangerous incidents
(g) immune status of the individual (e.g. a person on whom Hepatitis B immunisation has been ineffective could be considered to be at particular risk working with unscreened blood samples)
(h) medical history and concerns of the pregnant or breast-feeding employee

When carrying out the assessment of biological hazards there should always be a precautionary approach where there is uncertainty of effects.

Contact Safety Services or Occupational Health Service for advice on risk assessments if you have any concerns.

11. Chemical hazard
COSHH risk assessments should be carefully reviewed, especially for activities that involve the use of:
(a) chemicals or preparations with the following hazard statements:
   - H350: May cause cancer
   - H351: Suspected of causing cancer
   - H340: May cause genetic defects
   - H341: Suspected of causing genetic defects
   - H360: May damage fertility or the unborn child
   - H361: Suspected of damaging fertility or the unborn child
   - H362: May cause harm to breastfed children
H370: Causes damage to organs (single exposure)
H371: May cause damage to organs (single exposure)
H372: Causes damage to organs (repeated exposure)
H373: May cause damage to organs (repeated exposure)

(b) heavy metals including lead and organic mercury which are known to harm the unborn child

(c) cytotoxic or antimitotic drugs (i.e. potent carcinogens) for which there is no safe exposure limit.

(d) hormone preparations such as griseofulvins and prostaglandins.

The review should consider carefully how the hazardous substance could enter the pregnant or breast feeding employee and if existing controls are adequate.

Contact Safety Services or Occupational Health Service for advice on risk assessments if you have any concerns.

12. Work in Compressed Air, Diving and Hyperbaric Pressure
These activities must not be undertaken during pregnancy.
Pregnancy and Breast-feeding Risk Assessment

Name:____________________________________________________
Department:_____________________________________ Tel: ____
Position:________________________________________________
Date:______  Expected date starting maternity leave ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Pregnancy or breast feeding H&amp;S risk issue</th>
<th>Action</th>
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Assessor:________________________________________________
Position:________________________________________________

Assessment Review Date(s):______________________________
Health and Safety Information for Pregnant and Breast Feeding Employees

If you are pregnant, think you may become pregnant or are planning to breast feed your baby after your return to work then you should read this short health and safety information leaflet. It contains information about what you have to do and what your line manager and other University staff have to do to ensure your health, safety and well-being before, during and after your pregnancy. It does not include information about maternity leave or pay; you can find this information on Human Resources and Organisational Development Directorate web pages.

If you work with hazardous substances (e.g. radio-nuclides, pathogens, carcinogens, teratogens, mutagens or heavy metals) before you become pregnant you must follow the instructions, procedures and training you have been given. This will ensure that you and, when the time comes, your foetus are not harmed.

When you become pregnant you should let your line manager know at a time that you are comfortable with. It is preferable to let your line manager know as soon as you can so that s/he can review the risk assessment for your work and begin to consider adjustments. They should involve you in the review of the risk assessment and will rely upon you to tell them about any difficulties you are having at work. Discuss with them any concerns you have about work, especially with hazardous substances. They should be able to reassure you that the working procedures they have in place will ensure that both you and your growing foetus are safe and healthy. You can find information about the risk assessment process on Safety Services web pages.

It is best if you can agree with your line manager about any adjustments to your work or workplace that are needed, but if you have any concerns then you should discuss these with your School/Directorate Health and Safety
Advisor. If they cannot help you then they will contact Safety Services or Occupational Health Service for advice.

If you have any health concerns that are work related then you can contact in confidence the Occupational Health Service for advice.

After your maternity leave and if you are breast feeding, let your line manager know if you want to express and store milk at work so that they can arrange for you to be provided with suitable facilities. If your work involves use of hazardous chemicals with the risk phrase H362 (i.e. chemical may cause harm to breast-fed children) then it is essential that the risk assessments for your work are reviewed and consideration given to changing your duties to avoid the work. If you continue the work, it is essential that you adhere to the risk assessment outcomes, including following the instructions, procedures and training you have been given.