

New and Expectant Mothers

"New or expectant mother" means an employee who:

- is pregnant, or
- has given birth within the previous six months, and/or
- still breastfeeding.

'Given Birth' is defined as 'delivered a living child, or after 24 weeks of pregnancy, a stillborn child'.

What do we need to do?

Employers are required to carry out a risk assessment for a new or expectant mother. This risk assessment must identify significant risk and detail effective control measures, it must also be reviewed regularly or when there are any changes e.g. healthcare professionals have raised an issue.

This risk assessment should include risks to the unborn child or the child of a woman who is still breastfeeding.

It is worth remembering that there could be different risks depending on whether an employee is pregnant, has given birth recently, or is breastfeeding.

Considerations

Employees may be at risk from processes, working conditions or physical, biological and chemical agents. These risks will vary depending on their health, the different stages of their pregnancy and on their return to work after giving birth.

Physical agents

- Movements and postures
- Manual handling
- Shocks and vibrations
- Noise
- Radiation (ionising and non-ionising)

Biological agents

- Infectious diseases

Chemical agents

- Toxic chemicals
- Mercury
- Antimitotic (cytotoxic) drugs
- Pesticides
- Carbon monoxide

Working conditions

- Facilities (including rest rooms)
- Mental and physical fatigue, working hours
- Poor mental health (including pre-natal / post-natal depression)
- Passive smoking
- Temperature
- Working with Display Screen Equipment (DSE)
- Travelling
- Violence
- Personal protective equipment
- Working alone
- Working at height

Additional Aspects to be considered

There are other aspects of pregnancy that may affect the pregnant employee. The impact will vary during the course of pregnancy and effects should be kept under review and risk assessment may need to be revised.

Examples include:

- Morning sickness
- Backache
- Varicose veins
- Hemorrhoids
- Frequent visits to the toilet
- Dexterity, agility, co-ordination, speed of movement and reach may be impaired
- Mental wellbeing
- Increasing size
- Tiredness
- Balance
- Comfort



Employers must also take into account any medical advice from the employee's GP or midwife about their health and adjust their working conditions accordingly.

Useful Links

The LCC policy and Risk Assessment template: [Employee health – Professional resources \(lincolnshire.gov.uk\)](http://lincolnshire.gov.uk)

[Protecting pregnant workers and new mothers - HSE](#)

[Breastfeeding and going back to work - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)