

WASHINGTON OB/GYN ASSOCIATES

95 Leonard Avenue
Building #1, Suite 300
Washington, PA 15301
724-225-3640 Phone

McMURRAY OB/GYN ASSOCIATES

2001 Waterdam Plaza
Suite 201
McMurray, PA 15317
724-942-5420 Phone

WASHINGTON OB/GYN ASSOCIATES

WAYNESBURG
343 East Roy Furman Highway
Suite 104
Waynesburg, PA 15370
724-627-7928 Phone

WASHINGTON OB/GYN ASSOCIATES

MON VALLEY-CHARLEROI
1200 McKean Avenue
Charleroi, PA 15022
724-483-1340 Phone

www.WashingtonObGyn.net

Most women can continue working during pregnancy. How long you can safely continue working depends on your job and your risk for medical problems. In general, if you are healthy, you have no problems with your pregnancy, and your workplace is safe, you will be able to work until labor begins. You may also be able to return to work soon after a normal delivery, if necessary. Ask your healthcare provider what is best for you and your baby.

Are some working conditions hazardous?

Some working conditions may be hazardous in pregnancy. Consider the following guidelines to determine when you may need to quit working:

- If you have a job that requires standing for a long time, you may need to stop working as early as 24 weeks into the pregnancy. When you stop depends on how long you are required to be on your feet, if you can take rest breaks and put your feet up, and on your medical history.
- Stooping and bending below knee level can be a problem. If this is part of your job, you may have to stop working as early as 20 weeks into the pregnancy.
- If you climb ladders or stairs on the job, you may have to stop working at 20 to 28 weeks.
- If you lift heavy objects, you may have to stop working as early as 20 weeks into the pregnancy.



Other possibly risky factors are excessive heat and heavy physical labor. Also, if your job exposes you to hazardous chemicals, gas, dust, fumes, radiation, or infectious diseases, you should be cautious. It is best to discuss these potential dangers with your healthcare provider **before** you are pregnant. (Note: The daily use of computer video displays is not a problem for pregnant women or a risk for miscarriage.)

You also need to consider how long your commute to work is, the amount of stress you have on the job, and your ability to handle your additional responsibilities at home.

How can I take care of myself?

- Talk to your healthcare provider about the work you do. Discuss what you can and cannot do on the job and possible problems.
- Change positions often. If you are sitting, keep your feet up. Get up every 2 hours for a 15-minute break and stretching. If you are standing, take rest breaks and put your feet up or lie down during lunch or coffee breaks.
- If you stand or walk a lot on the job, it can help to wear support stockings.
- If you sit a lot on the job, get a chair with good back support and arm rests.
- Eat often. Choose high-energy foods like yogurt with raisins, or fruit, or cheese and crackers.
- Avoid changing shifts.
- Drink water: You need extra fluids in pregnancy. Carry a water bottle with you to get the 2 quarts of water you need each day. Avoid caffeinated coffee, tea, and sodas.
- Get at least 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.
- Avoid or limit stressful situations. Do relaxing exercises.
- Know the signs and symptoms of problems (such as preterm labor) so you can judge when you are doing too much.

WASHINGTON OB/GYN ASSOCIATES

95 Leonard Avenue
Building #1, Suite 300
Washington, PA 15301
724-225-3640 Phone

McMURRAY OB/GYN ASSOCIATES

2001 Waterdam Plaza
Suite 201
McMurray, PA 15317
724-942-5420 Phone

WASHINGTON OB/GYN ASSOCIATES

WAYNESBURG
343 East Roy Furman Highway
Suite 104
Waynesburg, PA 15370
724-627-7928 Phone

WASHINGTON OB/GYN ASSOCIATES

MON VALLEY-CHARLEROI
1200 McKean Avenue
Charleroi, PA 15022
724-483-1340 Phone

www.WashingtonObGyn.net

Can I take sick leave during my pregnancy?

Many women wonder whether they can take sick leave during at least part of their pregnancy. Generally, employers pay sickness benefits to pregnant women only if they are unable to continue work because of a strenuous or hazardous job or a pregnancy complication. If a pregnancy is normal and uncomplicated, it is not considered to be an illness. This means you will probably not be eligible for sick leave.

Check with your employer about your benefits. Ask when and how long you can take maternity leave. Depending on the state you live in, you may be eligible for state disability benefits.

What legal protections do I have at my workplace?

The **Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA)** protects your right to work during pregnancy. An employer cannot discriminate against you based on pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Pregnancy or related disorders must be considered like any other medical condition. You are entitled to the same employee benefits, such as leave, seniority credits, and reinstatement privileges, as other workers with similar abilities or limitations. The PDA protects you against being fired or refused a job or promotion because you are pregnant. However, it does not require your employer to make it easier for you to work.

The **Occupational Safety and Health Act** requires employers to maintain a safe and healthy workplace. If needed, certain changes may be made at the workplace to allow you to continue your employment safely. Some companies have adopted a "fetus protection policy." Such policies prohibit female employees of childbearing age from doing a job that exposes them to toxic substances at levels considered unsafe for the baby.

Developed by Phyllis G. Cooper, RN, MN, and RelayHealth

Published by [RelayHealth](#).

Last modified: 2007-08-06

Last reviewed: 2007-07-30

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.

[Women's Health Advisor 2008.1 Index](#)

[Women's Health Advisor 2008.1 Credits](#)

© 2008 RelayHealth and/or one of its affiliates. All Rights Reserved.