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## GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYMENT DURING NORMAL PREGNANCY

Normal pregnancy does not mean that a pregnant woman feels "normal" all the time. Early pregnancy may be accompanied by nausea and fatigue. By mid-pregnancy, abdominal enlargement, weight gain, and swelling of the feet are present. Finally, there may be backache, bloating, insomnia, abdominal and pelvic pressure, awkwardness, easy fatigability, and false labor contractions. While annoying, these symptoms are seldom disabling, and employment may continue.

Two common discomforts of early pregnancy that could affect a woman's ability to perform her job include nausea/vomiting and fatigue. In particular, nausea and/or vomiting can be provoked by workplace odors or restrictions around eating. These problems can usually be managed by medication, taking a brief break snacking as needed, and scheduling the most demanding work for times when the woman tends to feel less nauseous, if possible.

Ideally, the woman and her employer will be able to make reasonable adjustments to deal with these discomforts in the workplace. Simply precautions that can help reduce excessive fatigue and potentially reduce the risk of pregnancy complications include:

- Modifying shift times and tasks
- Minimizing lifting, bending, and prolonged standing
- Using proper lifting techniques
- Drinking plenty of fluids

The following are some guidelines for employment during pregnancy and after delivery.

- If there is bleeding during early pregnancy, you should not work until the bleeding has ceased for 48 hours
- Work in the following occupations may continue until labor begins: office work, teaching, nursing, or similar occupations. See below for lifting guidelines
- Working with chemicals and other potentially toxic substance is permissible as long as OSHA safety standards are followed. Radiation exposure should be avoided during pregnancy.
- You should be prepared to return to work following the 6 week postpartum checkup, unless told otherwise at the time. Extension of disability beyond 6 week must be medically justified. A longer leave of absence may be arranged individually with your employer, but disability can only be certified according to the above guidelines.
- If, at any time, your medical condition requires you to stop working, you will be told of this and a disability statement will be given to you at one of your appointments.
- Please turn in disability or FMLA paperwork 2 weeks before it is due to your employer, there is a \$15.00 fee for completing this for you, which is due upon completion of the paperwork.
- Occupations involving dangerous tasks, such as climbing ladders or heavy manual labor, should be discontinued after 24 weeks gestation. A note may be given stating that a lighter duty job should be given.

### Lifting Guidelines:

1. The recommended weight limits are based on gestational age, intermittent versus repetitive, time (hours/day) spent lifting, and lifting height from floor and distance in front of body.
2. 0-19 weeks of pregnancy:
  - a. If you perform infrequent lifting, you may lift no more than 36 pounds.
  - b. If you perform frequent lifting less than 1 hour per day, you may not lift over 30 pounds.
  - c. If you perform frequent lifting more than 1 hour per day, you may not lift over 18 pounds.
3. 20-42 weeks of pregnancy:
  - a. If you perform infrequent lifting, you may lift no more than 26 pounds.
  - b. If you perform frequent lifting less than 1 hour per day, you may not lift over 22 pounds.
  - c. If you perform frequent lifting more than 1 hour per day, you may not lift over 13 pounds.



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"...the joy of the Lord is your strength." — Nehemiah 8:10 