



# PREGNANCY, POSTPARTUM PERIOD AND WORK

## Advice and guidance by the occupational physician

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### 1 ADVISING THE EMPLOYER

**Advise the implementation of an appropriate Health, Safety and Welfare policy (OHS) for pregnant employees and for women in the postpartum period**

- Risks (identified, specified and minimised)
- At-risk groups (identified and specified)
- Provision of information (existence of a protocol)
- Individual health monitoring (preventive consultation)

**Advise to eliminate work-related risks and hazards**

- Consult the recent general and specific Risk Assessment (in Dutch: RI&E), or advise the employer about the statutory obligation to identify the risks and hazards and to eliminate these through application of the occupational hygiene strategy
- Advise on measures and actions that may be necessary
- If appropriate, consult an occupational hygienist or other experts dealing with working conditions

**Advise to organise work in an appropriate, risk-free manner**

- Elimination of hazards through application of the occupational hygiene strategy
- Temporary changes to working arrangements or working hours/breaks
- Temporary assignment to other work
- Temporary relief of duties

Ensure an appropriate implementation of

- An OHS policy, and
- Provision of individualised information (existence of a protocol), and
- Individual health monitoring (access to the occupational physician for preventive consultations)

### 2 INVITE THE PREGNANT EMPLOYEE FOR A PREVENTIVE CONSULTATION

**Draw up a risk profile**

- Determine the employee's workload and capacity for work, and
- Identify the work-related and person-related risk factors, and
- Establish whether the employee has a higher risk profile and, if so, draw up a strategic plan



### 3 ADVISING THE EMPLOYEE

#### If the employee has a higher risk profile, discuss the strategic plan

- Give specific advice on the assessed work-related risk factors
- Give specific recommendations if there are person-related risk factors
- Ensure that the proposed action is taken
- Consider consultation with the employer/manager
- Consider consultation with/referral to midwife, gynaecologist or GP

#### Provide information regarding

- The normal course of pregnancy and the postpartum period
- The implications for the employee's capacity for work and for out-of-work activities and commitments
- General work-related arrangements (rest time and facilities)
- Combining breastfeeding and work

#### Verify if the employer has informed the employee about the arrangements regarding

- Maternity leave
- Breastfeeding
- Parental leave
- Child care

#### If appropriate, encourage the employee to make choices regarding work-family balance

- Gradually reduce out-of-work activities
- Balance work and family life after maternity leave

If necessary, provide the employer and/or manager with information or advice on the measures to be taken regarding the work-related risk factors and/or on the recommendations regarding the person-related risk factors.

### 4 GUIDANCE DURING ABSENTEEISM

*During pregnancy: after 1 week*

*In postpartum period: 2 weeks after maternity leave*

#### New medical problems/symptoms/conditions

- Revise risk profile and strategic plan, or draw up a risk profile if none is available yet

#### Advise the employer to apply to the UWV (Dutch institute of social insurance) for the reimbursement of pay on the basis of occupational disability due to pregnancy or childbirth in case of

- Reduced productivity (due to pregnancy or childbirth)

#### No obvious reason for absenteeism?

- Assess other relevant factors (anxiety, lack of social support – at work or in private life –, physical strain in private life)

### 5 EVALUATION

*In case of higher risk profile:*

*In case of absenteeism:*

*3 to 6 weeks after preventive consultation*

*3 weeks after first consultation*

#### Verify

- Whether the recommended work-related changes and other measures have been realised
- How supervision by the midwife, gynaecologist or GP is going
- The progress of the medical problems

#### Unfavourable developments?

- Revise the risk profile and then the strategic plan
- Consider consultation with the employer/manager and/or midwife, gynaecologist or GP

#### Make follow-up appointments

- Until adjustments are realised and/or measures are taken
- Until the employee starts maternity leave, and/or
- Until the employee fully resumes work