

# PREGNANCY AND WORKING WITH CHILDREN

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS? HOW CAN THEY BE PREVENTED?



SERVICE DE SANTÉ AU TRAVAIL  
MULTISECTORIEL

### PREGNANCY IS NOT A DISEASE

Work-related risks are not necessarily more significant than the risks of everyday life.  
**However, working with children may require changes to your duties.**

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS? WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### > Physical agents

#### *Heavy lifting*

Regularly carrying children is a significant weight during pregnancy.

Pregnant women should not be assigned to workplaces where they will often be required to lift children.

#### *Posture*

##### **Prolonged periods of standing**

Breaks are important, both at home and at work. It is important to allow time to sit down regularly, for example:

- 10 minutes every two hours,
- 30 minutes in the middle of the working day.

##### **Sitting position**

Avoid sitting on low chairs and small children's seats in order to avoid increased intra-abdominal pressure.

An ergonomic chair can improve poor posture.

#### *Risk of aggression or blows to the belly*

If you work with aggressive children, you should ideally be assigned to a different role. You should also avoid participating in activities where you risk receiving a blow to the belly.



### > Mental load

We recommend avoiding overtime and getting at least 12 hours of daily rest. Lone working should be avoided.

### > Chemical agents

This risk is rarely present in creches and children's homes. There is no evidence to suggest that pregnant women should avoid soaps or hydro-alcoholic hand sanitisers. However, they should avoid sanitising large surfaces using hydro-alcoholic sprays in order to limit the risk of inhalation.



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## WHAT ARE THE RISKS? HOW CAN THEY BE PREVENTED?

### > Infectious agents



Most infectious agents present no particular risk during pregnancy. However, the following infections may be present in creches and children's homes :

	INFECTIOUS AGENT	WHAT TO DO BEFORE PREGNANCY	PREVENTION
	<b>Chicken pox and shingles virus</b> (herpes zoster)	Check immunity and vaccination prior to pregnancy if necessary.	Removal from duty in the event of insufficient immunity, whatever the age of the children.
	<b>Rubella virus</b>	Check immunity and vaccination prior to pregnancy if necessary.	Removal from duty in the event of insufficient immunity, whatever the age of the children.
	<b>Cytomegalovirus</b> (CMV)		Children < 3 years: removal from duty Children > 3 years: - follow hygiene guidelines, - no nappy changing or helping children use the toilet avoid working alone (e.g. at the start and end of the day), - wear gloves when contact with bodily secretions (saliva, nasal secretions).
	<b>Measles, mumps and whooping cough</b>	Vaccination before pregnancy. (the whooping cough vaccine is also recommended in order to better protect the newborn baby).	Temporary removal of unvaccinated pregnant women in the event of an epidemic outbreak, whatever the age of the children.
	<b>Parvovirus B19</b> (or 5 <sup>th</sup> disease)	Check immunity if working with children < 6 years.	Removal from duty working with children < 6 years for non-immunised persons.
	<b>Hepatitis A virus</b>	Vaccination before pregnancy. Check immunity of the pregnant woman.	Observe a good hands hygiene. Wear gloves when changing nappies and helping children use the toilet.
	<b>Hepatitis B and C virus</b>	Vaccination against hepatitis B before pregnancy. Check immunity of the pregnant woman.	Avoid providing care requiring the use of sharp or pointed instruments and all contact with blood.
	<b>Infections causing a high fever</b> (influenza, scarlet fever etc.)	Vaccination against influenza before pregnancy or from the 2 <sup>nd</sup> trimester of the pregnancy.	Avoid close contact with people with a fever or/in an infectious condition. Temporary removal from duty in the event of an epidemic outbreak.

The necessity to remove the pregnant woman from her workplace depends on her immunity and the age of the children. **The occupational health physician in agreement with the employer will always aim to adjust the duties of workplace .**



### THE NORMAL RULES ARE ESSENTIAL: FOLLOW THESE RULES AT WORK AND HOME!

- **Hygiene rules:**  
above all, observe a good hand hygiene!
- **Disease prevention rules:**  
ensure proper disinfection and wear gloves if necessary!

### HYGIENE RULES

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, for 30 seconds, especially before eating, drinking or bringing anything to your mouth!
- Wash your hands before and after using the toilet, before and after providing care, even if wearing gloves.
- Use hydroalcoholic hand sanitiser frequently.
- Avoid close contact with people who reporting fever or illness-