



Fact Sheet

25 September 2015

Maternity Protection at the University of Zurich (UZH): Information for Expectant Mothers and Employees Planning a Pregnancy

A number of protective regulations apply to pregnant working women. Those regulations are aimed at safeguarding mother and child from hazards, overexertion and injury to health in the workplace. Unborn babies can already face health risks even shortly after conception.

Maternity protection measures at the workplace are most effective when the pregnancy is disclosed to the supervisor as early as possible so that corresponding protections can be implemented on the job. It is therefore advisable to fill out the accompanying checklist already at the time of planning a pregnancy so that your workplace and/or job activities there can be adapted accordingly early on, or so that corresponding protective precautions can be taken.

An employer may assign hazardous and strenuous work to pregnant women and nursing mothers only if a risk assessment has determined that the work poses no specific health risk to mother and child, or only if an identified health risk can be eliminated by means of suitable protective precautions (Article 62, paragraph 2 of Ordinance 1 of the Swiss Federal Employment Act (EAO 1)). The risk assessment must be carried out by professionally qualified occupational safety specialists. At the University of Zurich, the office Safety, Security and Environment performs such risk assessments with the support of other occupational safety specialists.

Talk with your gynecologist about your work situation during your first visit. Since the operations of some of the University of Zurich's organizational units (departments, hospital divisions) involve particular hazards, you should be capable of providing information when your physician asks you about special workplace hazards.

The documents accompanying this fact sheet enable you to undertake an initial workplace hazard identification assessment on your own. They consist of a checklist of questions to which you can answer «yes», «no» or «not sure», as well as explanatory notes about the checklist. On the basis of this risk determination and the state of your health, your gynecologist will decide whether the circumstances warrant your work activities being restricted or prohibited.

Procedure to determine whether you engage in potentially dangerous activities in your workplace

1. Fill out the enclosed checklist as a first step towards identifying any workplace activities that could potentially be hazardous during your pregnancy. This is best done together with your supervisors, also in view of potential language difficulties and for the purpose of planning potential precautions to be taken.
2. If you must answer «yes», to a question, see first whether you can avoid those work activities or delegate them to someone else. If you cannot, find out whether it is possible in your case to continue working under corresponding protective precautions as set out in the explanatory notes.



If you answer «not sure», to a question, please clarify with your supervisor whether you are exposed to that hazardous activity. Submit the filled-out checklist and any accompanying annotations to your gynecologist.

3. If you have questions or are uncertain about something, contact the office Safety, Security and Environment, which will conduct a detailed risk assessment and judge whether your work activities can be modified or arranged in a way so that you can execute them during pregnancy or the nursing period without endangering yourself or your child.

The aforementioned checklist and accompanying explanatory notes can be viewed on the UZH homepage at www.su.uzh.ch/activities/arbeitsmedizin/doku.html under the rubric «Maternity Protection», and can be downloaded from there as PDF documents.

We would also like to direct the attention of female employees of the University of Zurich who work for the UniversityHospital Zurich (UHZ) to the identically titled UHZ checklist, which points out hazards specific to the UHZ and is accessible via the UHZ's intranet.

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