

Information to Employment restrictions and bans on women during pregnancy and lactation

Pregnant workers may be exposed to a health hazard at a laboratory workplace. That is why the rules of maternity protection are of particular importance to them. A corresponding hazard to mother and child is not uncommon in the handling of chemical / biological agents in laboratories.

For your protection and protection of your child, please inform your supervisor (s) as soon as possible about your pregnancy and the expected delivery date. The message will be kept confidential.

The Medical University of Innsbruck is obliged to design the workplace of a pregnant or breastfeeding woman in such a way that the life and health of mother and child are not endangered by the professional activity. If the workplace assessment indicates that the safety or health of the pregnant or breastfeeding woman is at risk, the service shall take appropriate protective measures, such as: Reorganization of the workplace, employment restrictions, job changes or exemption due to employment prohibition.

In the following, very important information on maternity protection for all pregnant employees because the health of the mother or child is at risk.

There are specific employment bans and restrictions for the following activities:

In General:

1. **Individual ban on employment** if, according to a medical certificate, the life or health of mother or child is endangered if the activity continues.
2. **Ban on night work** between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m.
3. **Prohibition of overtime** - i.e. Working hours of more than 8 1/2 hours a day are not permitted.
4. **Ban on Sundays and public holidays.**
5. **Prohibition of heavy physical labor** and forced labor. This includes the regular lifting and carrying of loads by hand weighing more than 5 kg as well as frequent considerable stretching, bending, crouching or bending over.
6. **Standing for longer than 4 hours is no longer permitted** from the 5th month of pregnancy.

7. **Prohibition of activities with increased accident hazards**, e.g. because of possible slipping hazards on wet floors or handling of hazardous substances, if unpredictable dangerous reactions are to be expected
8. The Medical University offers the pregnant or nursing worker the **opportunity to lie down and rest under suitable conditions by providing a folding bed.**
9. Expectant mothers **may not be employed** in the last 8 weeks before the expected birth (**so-called protection period or maternity protection**). During this time, the pregnant employee may not be employed by any employer. Even if she agrees to the work and would be in a position to do so. Even after birth, a protection period of 8 weeks applies. (An extension of the period is to be observed in case of premature, multiple or caesarean delivery).

In the laboratory:

1. **Residence ban** in the control area when using ionizing radiation (X-radiation, radioactive radiation). Prohibition of handling of open radioactive substances or nuclides.
2. **Expecting mothers** must protect themselves from the following hazardous substances, otherwise the health of the mother or child is endangered (**i.e. working with the hazardous substances, as well as working in rooms where these hazardous materials are used is prohibited**):
 - o Chemicals listed in the safety data sheet with H-phrases, no exposure to carcinogenic, mutagenic or teratogenic substances.
for example: ethidiumbromid, propidium iodide, acrylamide, mercaptoethanol, cytostatics, narcosis gases, etc.
 - o Working with potentially pathogenic human germs, as well as potentially genetically modified organisms is generally prohibited (risk groups 2, 3, 4).
3. **Infection sources:**

Prohibition on the use of substances, preparations or articles which, according to experience, may transmit pathogens when the pregnant or lactating woman is lexposed to the pathogens. This prohibition on employment is of particular importance for medical, biological and microbiological laboratories. Working with potentially pathogenic germs is generally prohibited. In particular, any activity with potentially humanpathogenic genetically modified organisms in an S2 laboratory is prohibited.

4. **Infectious diseases** such as Rubella, marigold, viral hepatitis, and cytomegalovirus are dangerous to both the mother and child. Pregnant and breastfeeding women should not be employed in activities where there is a corresponding risk of infection.
5. Furthermore, pregnant and breastfeeding women should not be employed in activities where direct body contact (skin contact, inhalation of aerosols, mucous membrane contact) with body fluids and tissues of patients is possible. Risks of infection can be minimized by wearing appropriate personal protective Equipment (e.g., gloves, goggles, face shield, gown, particulate respirator). It should be noted, however, that pregnant or breastfeeding women are at risk for all activities that May compromise the protective effect of personal protective equipment. Therefore, pregnant and breastfeeding women should not be employed in the following work:
- activities involving piercing, cutting or fragile instruments and devices (such as cannulas, lancets, glass pipettes) presenting a risk of infection;
 - acceptance, unpacking and preparation of the study material;
 - blood samples; Preparation of blood smears;
 - shedding and examination of plasma / serum, stool, cerebrospinal fluid, urine, sputum, etc .;
 - contact with contaminated material;
 - cleaning of contaminated equipment or objects;
 - blood sampling in humans and animals;
 - injections in humans or animals;
 - working with biological substances within the meaning of § 40 Abs. 4 Z 2 to 4 ASchG, as far as it is known that these substances or therapeutic measures to be applied in case of damage caused by them jeopardize the health of the expectant mother or the child-to-be.

6. **Obligatory rule compliance:**

These rules of conduct listed here are obligatory. In the case of non-compliance, it may come after 2 verbal and one-time written warning to the job referral. This information doesn't replace the case-by-case evaluation of the workplace by occupational physician.

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