

# YOU ARE PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING

## and working in a research laboratory

Some risks are particularly significant during the first trimester of pregnancy. It is therefore essential to **inform your occupational physician as early as possible.**

**To protect future babies, the priority is to improve prevention in the workplace.**

### YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT MAY PRESENT HAZARDS THAT NEED TO BE IDENTIFIED

Certain chemical or biological agents, as well as ionising radiation present in research laboratories, can enter your body and pose risks during pregnancy or breastfeeding. The most common routes of exposure are respiratory and dermal but can also be digestive or ocular.

### IF HAZARDS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED, YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Some work situations are prohibited by law. However, in most cases, adjusting work organization, following good laboratory practices, using collective protective equipment (such as properly functioning fume hoods and microbiological safety cabinets), and wearing personal protective equipment can **prevent exposure to chemical, biological, or radiological risks during pregnancy.**

Risk assessment is therefore a crucial step to ensure you can safely remain at your workstation.

### TALK TO YOUR UNIT DIRECTOR AND REQUEST A MEDICAL EXAMINATION WITH YOUR OCCUPATIONAL PHYSICIAN

**The unit director** is responsible for risk prevention for pregnant or breastfeeding workers. They are supported in this role by the unit's prevention assistant, radiation protection advisor, the institutional prevention advisor, and the occupational physician.

**The occupational physician** provides specific medical monitoring for pregnant, postpartum, or breastfeeding workers. **He may recommend adjusted working hours, modified duties, or even a temporary reassignment based on your health condition.**

A return-to-work medical visit is required after maternity leave, especially if you plan to continue breastfeeding.



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### REGULATORY INFORMATION TO BE AWARE OF

#### Chemical Risk

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and product labels provide information on product hazards.

- Prohibited: Assigning a pregnant or breastfeeding woman to a position involving exposure to category 1A or 1B\* reproductive toxicants is forbidden:



Hazard statement H360 – May damage fertility or the unborn child

- Not prohibited but requires risk assessment: For category 2 reproductive toxicants:



Hazard statement H361 – Suspected of damaging fertility or the unborn child

- Breastfeeding: No specific pictogram exists, but the hazard statement applies:  
H362 – May cause harm to breast-fed children

#### Nota bene :

Many other substances may be harmful to the fetus but are not explicitly prohibited under French law. These include:

- Category 2 carcinogens and mutagens
- Volatile organic solvents
- Volatile anesthetics
- Natural or synthetic sex hormones
- Endocrine disruptors
- Certain medications (e.g. antineoplastics/cytostatics, antivirals, immunosuppressants)

Special care must be taken when handling such substances, especially when weighing powders in the lab.

#### Biological Risk

- Prohibited: Exposing a non-immune pregnant woman to rubella virus or toxoplasma.
- Not prohibited but requires risk assessment: For all biological agents that could affect pregnancy. These include:
  - Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
  - Hepatitis B and C
  - HIV
  - Parvovirus B19
  - Q fever
  - Brucellosis
  - Chickenpox
  - Influenza

#### Radiological Risk

- Prohibited: Assigning a pregnant woman to work requiring Category A classification. Similarly, a breastfeeding woman must not be assigned to work involving internal exposure to ionizing radiation.
- Not prohibited but requires risk assessment: For Category B agents, as exposure must remain below 1 mSv (public exposure limit) for pregnant workers.

\* Other hazardous chemicals also fall under strict regulation, such as benzene, nitro and chloronitro derivatives of benzene, dinitrophenol, aniline, benzidine, and naphthylamines.

Heavy lifting, prolonged standing, exposure to noise, or electromagnetic radiation are also work situations that must be considered.



**If informed in time, your occupational physician can advise and propose adjustments to ensure a safe and healthy pregnancy for you and your baby.**