

Workplace Health and Safety Tips for Expectant Mothers

During pregnancy women may find that some existing problems (for example back pain) get worse, or that they develop new difficulties such as being more tired, needing to eat more frequently, or have problems walking. Such things can affect pregnant women in the workplace.

Certain work activities, such as manual handling, working at height, work involving chemicals, certain Security functions, need to be considered carefully by managers generally, and their suitability for pregnant workers assessed. Pregnant staff who are due to carry out fieldwork should contact the Health and Safety Team (health.and.safety@lse.ac.uk) about a more detailed risk assessment.

If you have any concerns, or would prefer a face to face assessment, please contact Health.And.Safety@lse.ac.uk

(**Note:** you should also consult your GP or midwife if you have concerns, and follow their advice. There is also useful advice on NHS Choices website <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/pregnancy-and-baby-care.aspx#close>).

These tips identify some common problems, and what can be done about them.

POSSIBLE DIFFICULTY	WHO MIGHT BE AFFECTED (examples of who may be affected – there are others)	POSSIBLE WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS
Difficulties and discomfort from standing for long periods	Lecturers, trainers, those at serving points, event stewards, those at fundraising events, outreach, recruitment or careers fairs.	Use seating provided. Alternate jobs so you don't stand for such long periods. Lecturers could speak to Timetables to adjust teaching.
Difficulties with physical exertion, and /or awkward postures.	Women working in the Nursery, Catering, Library, Maintenance, those making deliveries, setting up for events and fairs (as above), those responsible for stationery.	Inform Line Manager of your pregnancy, so they can risk assess your work, and make adjustments. Ask others to help. Work in teams. Reduce load.
Back pain	All pregnant women	Take sufficient breaks. Make sure the chair is properly adjusted, with the back well supported. Complete a workstation assessment (Complywise training and DSE assessment). Contact H&S Team.
Tingling/pins and needles/numbness in the hands	Computer users, catering staff, maintenance staff, others doing any repetitive tasks involving hands/wrists	Complete a workstation assessment (Complywise training and DSE assessment) and adjust your workstation. Take breaks more

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		frequently. Rotate jobs. Contact H&S Team.
Swollen ankles	All pregnant women	Avoid standing for long periods; put your feet up occasionally; do foot exercises
Difficulties bending or reaching	All pregnant women	Avoid this activity – ask for help. Rearrange items you use frequently to avoid the problem.
Overheating	All pregnant women	Adjust local temperature. Use a fan. Take breaks in a cooler location
General tiredness	All pregnant women	Speak to line manager about the option of flexible working, adjusting start and end times (to avoid the rush hour commute), increasing the number of breaks. Make use of the LSE's rest rooms in NAB and 32 LIF, and the New and Expectant Mothers Room.
Tiredness from extended hours or shift work	Shift workers; women working on events; women carrying out research outside normal core hours	Speak to line manager about changing shift pattern; speak to line manager about compensating for late night with later start
Difficulties walking down stairs	Women in the latter stages of pregnancy; those with pelvic problems	Contact the Health and Safety Team
Exposure to infectious diseases	Staff in the Early Years Centre (Nursery), residences, all front line staff.	Practice good hand hygiene (wash and dry hands frequently). Ensure vaccinations are in place.
Fieldwork (off-campus activities)	Researchers and other academic staff, student recruiters, widening participation staff, alumni relations.	Contact the Health and Safety Team