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INTRODUCTION

As a group, new and expectant mothers are more likely to be susceptible to the harmful effects of certain activities, physical, chemical and biological agents in the workplace than the rest of the workforce

Depending on the nature of the effect, these agents can harm either the foetus or the mother. Here are some examples:-

- Physical hazards
 - Movements and postures (awkward access and workstation set up)
 - Lifting or carrying heavy loads
 - Shocks and Vibration, Noise;
 - Ionising and non-Ionising radiation, Electro Magnetic Fields
- Biological Agents
 - Infectious diseases (e.g. brucellosis)
- Chemical Hazards
 - Exposure to toxic chemicals, Mercury, Carbon monoxide
 - Handling drugs or specific chemicals such as pesticides, lead, etc.
- Working Conditions
 - Inadequate facilities (including rest rooms)
 - Mental and physical fatigue, long working hours, night work
 - Stressful work or external Stress (including post-natal depression)
 - Working with VDU's (Visual Display Units)
 - Exposure to cigarette smoke
 - High or low temperatures
 - Lone working
 - Work at heights
 - Travelling
 - Exposure to violence



- Personal protective equipment
- Inadequate / excessive nutrition
- Specific Risks Associated with Breastfeeding
 - Working with organic mercury
 - Working with radioactive material
 - Exposure to lead

RESPONSIBILITIES

What your Faculty or Department should do

The first step is for your faculty or department to assess the risks from its teaching research and business activities to any female employees and students who are of childbearing age. These risks may involve a new DSE assessment, variations to your work pattern or removing you from the work area.

What you should do

If you are planning to have a child, or think you may be pregnant, you should bring this to the attention of your line manager as soon as possible so that he or she can take steps to protect you and your child from activities or potential exposure that could be harmful.

For more information look the links below for guidance from the Health and Safety Executive: or contact the Health and Safety Team (ext.4410) for advice.

- Guide for New and expectant mothers who work <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg373.pdf>
- Additional information on risks <http://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/>

FORMS

[Generic risk assessment new and expectant mothers](#)