



Fact Sheet

Pregnant Worker Counseling Program

Reproductive hazards and teratogens are a growing concern in the workplace. The objective of the Pregnant Worker counseling program is to assist women, who are childbearing age, pregnant, or nursing, in understanding the risks and minimizing exposure to these hazards in the workplace through education and counseling.

What are reproductive hazards?

They are substances or agents – chemicals, biological substances, or radioactive materials – that have adverse effects on various aspects of reproduction, including fertility, gestation, lactation, and general reproductive performance.

What are teratogens?

They are substances or agents that can alter the structure or function of fetal development. Their health effects can range from congenital birth defects, neurobehavioral disorders at young ages, and cancer at older ages.

How can employees and students be protected?

- Should any reproductive hazards or teratogens be used in the area, please notify EHRS for Pregnant Worker Counseling to get additional training on appropriate methods of control. ([Click here for examples on Methods for Controlling Hazards.](#))
- Work with chemicals in a chemical fume hood and store them in sealed containers when not in use.
- Practice time, distance, and shielding when working with radioactive materials.
- Practice universal precautions to reduce occupational exposure to infectious diseases, and proper hygiene when handling other hazards, such as chemicals and radioactive materials.
- Always use proper personal protective equipment for the appropriate hazard(s) and task(s).
- Adjust height of work surfaces and chairs, provide more space for moving around, remove obstacles at lower levels, reduce the amount of work performed at heights, and avoid lifting/lowering objects from the floor with hands below mid-shin.
- No eating (including chewing gum), drinking, smoking, applying cosmetics or lip balm, or manipulating contact lenses in areas where hazardous materials are present.

Quick Take

- Please contact [EHRS](#) to schedule a pregnant worker counseling session.
- Human Resources has information on [accommodations for nursing mothers](#).

