



# Occupational health advice for employers and pregnant women

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal College of Midwives and the Faculty of Occupational Medicine document, ***Occupational Health advice for employers and pregnant women during the COVID-19 pandemic version 3.4*** has now been archived.

Please see below a joint statement from the RCOG, RCM and FOM on this issue.

## **Clinical guidance:**

The clinical evidence relating to the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and pregnancy is contained within the substantive [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection in pregnancy](#) clinical guidance available on the RCOG website. It is important to note that:

- Pregnant women of any gestation are at no more risk of contracting the virus than any other non-pregnant person who is in similar health
- For those women who are 28 weeks pregnant and beyond, there is an increased risk of becoming severely ill should you contract COVID-19 (this is true of any viral illness contracted, such as flu).

## **A note on archiving the Occupational Health advice document:**

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal College of Midwives and the Faculty of Occupational Medicine document, *Occupational health advice for employers and pregnant women during the COVID-19 pandemic* was written for implementation at the peak of the pandemic. At this time, there was a clear instruction from the UK government that clinically vulnerable individuals were advised to stringently apply social distancing measures and extremely clinically vulnerable individuals were advised to shield.

The situation has now changed. The governments of all four UK countries have eased some restrictions on lockdown, which has led to changes in advice given to extremely vulnerable individuals (those who have been shielding) and the implementation of social distancing measures now varies across regions and UK countries according to virus prevalence.

There is now a more complex landscape of factors to consider regarding the safety of people (including pregnant women) in the workplace. Therefore, while the clinical information we have published still stands, the risk assessments and the resulting conclusions in relation to safety at work are expected to differ between employment sectors and by region and country, and therefore, a single recommendation is no longer appropriate.

We believe that the UK Government has a role to play in providing guidance about work during pregnancy and we hope to see additional Government-led guidance soon. We continue to liaise with the Government to request this support for pregnant women in different areas of the UK, working in different settings.

Our clinical advice is that social distancing is particularly important for all pregnant women who are 28 weeks and beyond, in order to lessen their risk of contracting the virus. For women with other medical conditions in addition to pregnancy, this should be considered on an individual basis.

This clinical advice must be considered by your employer as part of your workplace risk assessment. The remaining factors involved in reaching a decision about your safety at work must be evaluated in an individualised risk assessment, conducted by your employer, that is individual to you and your employment setting. Employers are guided on this by sector-specific advice published on the UK government [Working safely during Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) and [NHS Employers](#) websites. The RCOG is not able to comment or advise on these aspects as it is outside our area of expertise.

Employers have a responsibility to protect the health and safety of pregnant women who are working. This responsibility is laid out in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Under these regulations, employers are required to carry out risk assessments. If there are risks, your employer must take reasonable action to remove the risks by altering your working conditions or hours of work; by providing suitable alternative work on the same terms and conditions; or by suspending you on full pay (if there is no suitable alternative work).

Our full clinical advice can be found in our [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection in pregnancy guidance](#).

Further information for pregnant women and their families is also available in our [Q&As](#).