

PARENTAL LEAVE for birth mothers

Frequently asked questions for staff members

These FAQs are based on the policies and procedures of WHO at the time of writing based on WHO eManual III.6.15 Parental Leave policy revision of 1 January 2023. These FAQs are for guidance only. In the case of a conflict between the FAQs and the eManual provisions, the eManual provisions take precedence.

1. **As a birth mother what am I entitled to in terms of leave?**

The duration of the entitlement varies depending on the type and length of the contract you hold:

- **Fixed term** staff members benefit from 26 weeks for a single birth, and 30 weeks in case of multiple births;
- For **temporary** staff members the duration of parental leave for birth mothers depends on the appointment type and length:-
 - For staff members on temporary appointments under Staff Rule 420.4 of 12 months or more, including temporary appointments of less than one (1) year which are extended resulting in an uninterrupted period of service of one (1) year or longer, the full entitlement is 26 weeks (single birth) or 30 weeks (multiple births).
 - For staff members on temporary appointments under Staff Rule 420.4 of less than 12 months, the full entitlement is a total of 16 weeks (single birth) or 20 weeks (multiple births).

2. **When, how and who should I inform about my pregnancy?**

1. You must enter your request for parental leave into GSM using the 'maternity leave' option to provide official notification of the pregnancy and of the due date no later than between the 4th and 5th month of pregnancy. When you enter your leave request please enter your contact details in case the Organization/Staff Health and Wellbeing services (SHW)/Regional Staff Physician (RSP) needs to contact you during your absence.
2. The early action to request your parental leave ensures that SHW/RSP can approve your leave and your supervisor will be officially informed by GSM worklist notification upon approval of the leave request.

If you have any questions about the process, entitlements or about your leave, please contact your HQ Division Business Partner/Associate, Regional HR Manager or Country Office HR focal point to ensure that you receive explanations and clarity where necessary.

3. **My pregnancy may be high risk, can I keep it confidential?**

In case of high risk pregnancy or for any other reasons, you should seek confidential advice from SHW/RSP as soon as possible to regarding your situation.

4. **Can I have time off to attend antenatal appointments?**

Staff members are entitled to time off as uncertified or certified sick leave for medical appointments. For certified sick leave requests a certificate/attestation proving attendance at the appointment signed by a with a duly qualified medical practitioner or midwife must be uploaded along with the certified sick leave request when the duration of the absence is minimum half a day as explained in WHO eManual III.6.9 Certified sick leave.

PARENTAL LEAVE for birth mothers

Frequently asked questions for staff members

5. What actions should I take before I actually depart on parental leave?

- **Contact details**

Please provide contact details in your leave request and ensure your personal details are updated in GSM so that the Organization can get in touch if necessary during your absence. It is important to provide your personal email and/or telephone number to ensure that important information concerning you can be communicated to you during your absence.

- **Performance review**

You should ensure that the performance review has been undertaken and if necessary due to the start date of parental leave, adjustments made to the objectives and performance review cycle dates. If it is not possible to assess performance before departure, you should agree with your supervisor upon a delay in completion of the PMDS regular cycle. See below for more information on PMDS.

- **Leave requests**

Ensure that all leave is entered and approved prior to departure including post-parental leave absences if you already know what you intend to take. Ensure any completed leave is confirmed.

- **GSM - Vacation rules/Outlook - Out of office/Telephone - voicemail**

Ensure that you have put in place all the necessary “out of office” messages above for the planned period of absence. Delegate your GSM worklist as agreed with your supervisor.

- **SHI - Contact/make a request** for a hospital guarantee from the Staff Health Insurance.

6. Do I need to inform anyone when my baby is born?

Yes. It is essential to declare your child as a recognised WHO dependent in order to ensure that your benefits and entitlements are correctly implemented as quickly as possible after your baby is born. This will ensure that your baby is registered for mandatory health insurance purposes and is on the record for other entitlements, e.g. dependency allowance, home leave, etc.

The child must be registered as a new family member as soon as possible as is reasonably practical after the birth date. You will need the birth certificate as a supporting document. The declaration has to be made through the GSM 3-step process as follows (if you do not have access to GSM, contact your HR focal point who will facilitate the process for you):

1. Record the new family member:- navigate to Employee Self Service>Recognized Family Members>My Family Members>Add to add a Family Member here prior to requesting recognition by WHO for benefits. There is no approval required on step 1.
2. Request “recognition” of the new family member:- navigate to Employee Self Service>Recognized Family Members>Request for Recognition of My Family Member. You must upload the birth certificate at this stage. Global Human Resources will approve and you will receive a notification in your GSM worklist.
3. Apply for dependency status for your child:- navigate to Employee Self Service>Recognized Family Members>Apply for benefits for my Recognized Child>Child (0-18) Apply for Dependency Status>Add>complete the mandatory fields and submit.

PARENTAL LEAVE for birth mothers

Frequently asked questions for staff members

7. What happens if I am on probation when I go on parental leave?

Any decision to defer the completion of the probationary period or defer the within-grade increase (WIGI) will be taken in accordance with procedures for performance evaluation. See III.5 Performance and Change in Status. In principle, this should be discussed when reviewing your objectives after the approval of parental leave.

8. Will I still get my WIGI while I am on parental leave?

Your performance should have been assessed prior to your departure on leave, which will enable your supervisor to take a decision on your WIGI. If it was not possible to assess your performance before your departure the supervisor may discuss with you and defer the WIGI in accordance with the performance evaluation procedures pending your return to work.

9. What if the baby is born before the date parental leave was due to start?

The start date of the leave will only change if your baby is born more than two weeks before the due date. In this case the parental leave will start immediately from the date of birth of your baby. If the baby arrives within the two weeks prior to the due date, the leave commences as originally planned. In all cases you must advise SHW/RSP of the birth as soon as reasonably practical in order to ensure necessary action is taken to have your initial parental leave cancelled and a new request initiated for early childbirth. The HR Leave Specialist for the major office/division can assist staff in such case.

10. What if I am absent from work due to illness during my pregnancy?

Normal sick leave provisions will apply up to 2 weeks before the due date. You must advise SHW/RSP if you are absent due to health reasons through entering a sick leave request in accordance with WHO eManual III.6.9 Certified Sick leave. For any questions related to sick leave during your pregnancy please consult SHW/RSP.

11. What if my fixed-term appointment is due to end before my parental leave ends?

If your due date is within a maximum of 6 weeks after the expiry date of your appointment, your fixed-term appointment will be extended to cover the full entitlement to parental leave.

12. My appointment will expire 2 months before my baby is due. Will my appointment be extended to cover parental leave?

The Organization has no obligation to extend your appointment unless your due date is within a maximum of 6 weeks after the expiry date of your appointment. If your appointment expires 2 months before the due date, the Organization would not extend your appointment.

13. What happens if I need to change my return to full time work date?

If you wish to change the return date of your leave because you wish to come back earlier at 50% or end your 100% parental leave for whatever reason, when the pre-requisite conditions are met i.e.

- a minimum period of 6 weeks following delivery has elapsed (8 weeks for multiple births);
- the early return to work has been discussed with and agreed to by your supervisor; and,
- you have a medical certificate confirming your fitness to return to duty, you may submit an amended parental leave request for approval by SHW/RSP attaching the medical certificate. If you return to work full-time, you will not be able to revert to full-time or half-time parental leave. If you return to work half-time, you will not be able to revert to full-time parental leave.

PARENTAL LEAVE for birth mothers

Frequently asked questions for staff members

14. What if I am unable to return to work on the foreseen return date due to illness?

Normal certified sick leave provisions would apply in accordance with WHO eManual III.6.9 Certified Sick Leave. You must inform your supervisor and submit a certified sick leave request along with a medical certificate in GSM for approval by Staff Health and Wellbeing/Regional Staff Physician.

15. Can my supervisor contact me during parental leave?

A supervisor may contact you for certain issues e.g. to discuss your post- parental leave options or return to work options. A supervisor may also wish to keep you informed of any important structural changes or developments at work which have happened during your absence or administrative obligations that staff members are required to be aware of. A discussion with your supervisor should in any case take place prior to your departure on parental leave how you could be contacted if necessary e.g. personal email, telephone etc. A supervisor may not, however, request you to carry out any duties during your maternity leave.

16. How long can I take time off for breastfeeding and nurturing my child?

All staff members returning from parental leave are entitled to fully paid time off on a daily basis up to the child's 1st birthday for the purpose of feeding, breastfeeding and/or nurturing.

This time off is for a maximum of 2 hours per day (depending on the working hours per day). No time off will be granted where a working day is less than 6 hours per day. Time off is granted per work day and cannot be accumulated to take off a full or half day. The entitlement to paid time-off ends and staff are required to return to work full time work on the child's 1st birthday.

Staff members wishing to continue breastfeeding between the child's 1st and 2nd birthdays will benefit from approval of flexible working hours and/or an official part-time schedule and corresponding salary and allowances up to the child's 2nd birthday.

17. I will not be breastfeeding. Can I also have time off to nurture my child?

Yes. All staff members eligible for parental leave are entitled to fully paid time off on a daily basis up to the child's 1st birthday for the purpose of feeding, breastfeeding, nurturing and bonding. Please refer to the previous answer for the details.

18. Can I take certified sick leave to attend medical appointments for my child?

No. Certified sick leave applies only to staff members, not other family members. If the appointment is an emergency you could also take uncertified sick leave for family emergency. Otherwise you may take other leave including annual leave or discretionary leave (full days only) as appropriate.

19. What leave options do I have after my parental leave?

In the event, after your parental leave you are planning to extend your period of absence, you have the following leave options available, provided your manager approves your request in GSM and you make the request **at least 4 weeks** in advance of the absence dates. Staff members should note that retroactive requests for special leave without pay or leave without pay will not be accepted.

PARENTAL LEAVE for birth mothers

Frequently asked questions for staff members

Annual leave - you may request to use your accrued annual leave balance up to the end of the year (or as accrued up to the end of your contract if earlier). Annual leave is subject to manager approval.

Special leave without pay to take care of a child (absence at 100%) - for up to one year or the end date of your contract whichever is earlier. This leave does not require the staff member to exhaust annual leave balance prior to the leave without pay commencing and the position is normally kept open for the staff member's return. See WHO e-Manual III.6.20 for conditions and details. Staff members must complete the Special leave/Leave without pay – social security declaration request form and submit it to the HQ Division Business Partner/Associate, Regional HR Manager or Country Office HR focal point ensuring to indicate the options (Yes or No) on continuation of health insurance coverage, accident and illness insurance coverage, and/or pension fund contributions. The HQ Division Business Partner/Associate, Regional HR Manager or Country Office HR focal point submits the leave request on behalf of the staff member in GSM. Before submitting your leave request, if you opt to continue contributions you must organize with Insurance and Pension teams to pay in advance your own contributions and those of the Organization for the period of absence.

20. How can I amend or enter leave during my leave if I do not have access to GSM?

If during your parental leave you do not have access to GSM, you may ask your HR Leave Specialist or Leave Administrator to enter or amend leave requests on your behalf for approval.

21. Can I travel on home leave during parental leave?

Parental leave for birth mothers cannot be interrupted or overlapped by another leave type. If your absence on parental leave means that your eligibility period for home leave will be overdue you may take home leave at a later date without prejudice to your Home Leave due date. Please contact your HR leave specialist or HR focal point for assistance as required.

22. What if I decide not to return to work at the end of the parental leave period?

You must provide your written resignation in accordance with the notice period applicable to your contract i.e. one month for temporary appointments and three months for fixed-term.

23. Can I reclaim official holidays which occur during my parental leave?

No. Parental leave is calculated in uninterrupted calendar days, regardless of whether official holidays fall within that timeframe. Therefore, any official holidays during parental leave cannot be recovered or compensated separately.