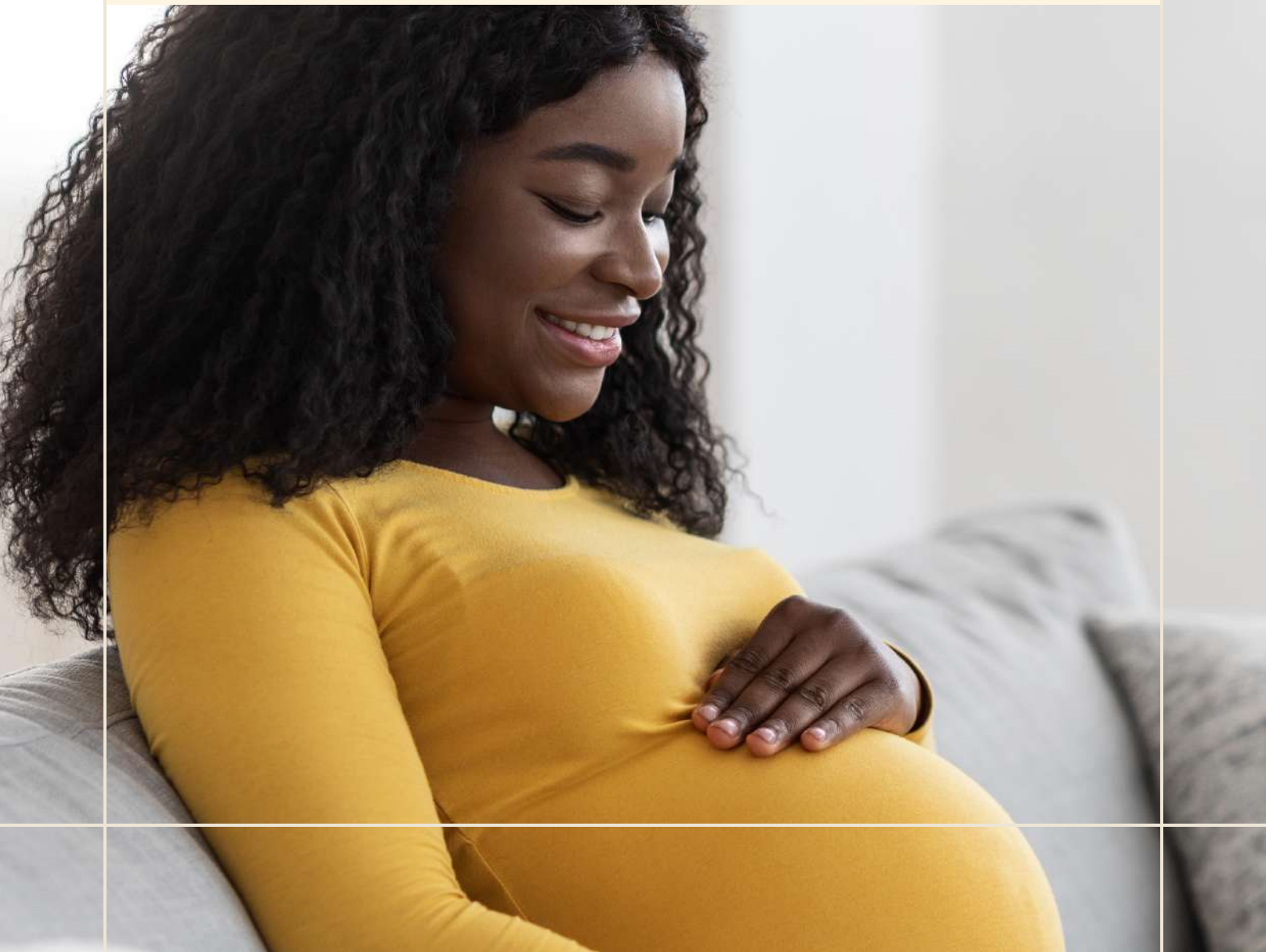


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How to tell work you're pregnant

MOTHER FIT RESOURCE



When should I tell my boss that I'm pregnant?

Most women wait until after the first trimester to announce their pregnancies at work, but ultimately, the decision is up to you. (If your job is strenuous, you work around dangerous chemicals, or you have severe morning sickness, you may need to tell your employer sooner.) When you're ready to tell your boss you're pregnant, schedule an in-person or virtual meeting, and let them know first before you tell other co-workers.



There's no right or wrong time for when to tell your boss you're pregnant, but most women wait until shortly after their first trimester – when the chance of miscarriage has decreased significantly – and before their pregnancy has started to noticeably show. Ultimately, the decision is yours based on your own comfort levels, and perhaps your relationship with your boss.

There's no rule or law that states exactly when you have to tell your employer you're pregnant, but letting your boss know within a reasonable window of time will give you both longer to work on a plan for your maternity leave. It will also give you time to discuss what you'll do if something unforeseen happens during pregnancy, like if you need to scale back on work, for example, or adjust your job duties or stop working sooner than you expected.

Are you having a lot of pregnancy symptoms?

If you're suffering from morning sickness, you're calling in sick more often than usual, or you're just generally fatigued, you might want to tell your boss earlier in your pregnancy. Letting others know what's going on can help them be more patient and understanding, and potentially make you feel less stressed during pregnancy.

Do you have a physically demanding job, or do you work around harmful chemicals? If so, you'll want to tell your employer you're pregnant early so you can discuss changing your job responsibilities in a safe and timely manner. Working while pregnant in physically strenuous roles or around harmful chemicals can lead to complications. Your ob-gyn or midwife can help you come up with potential solutions based on your pregnancy and risk levels. (They'll provide a note if it's needed too.)

How do you think the news will be received?

This depends on your workplace's culture, whether your colleagues' past pregnancies have influenced the office environment positively or negatively, and your own relationship with your boss. Some women feel more comfortable and confident waiting a little longer or timing their announcement to coincide with the end of a project or performance review.



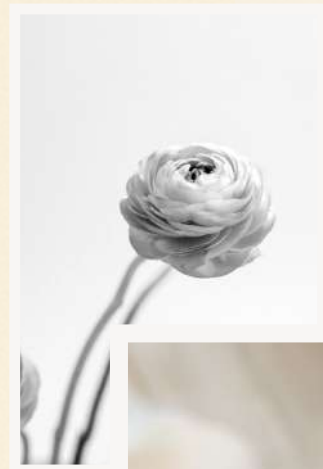
What to know before you tell your boss you're pregnant

Here are a few important things to know (and do) before you tell your boss you're pregnant.

Understand your workplace rights. In most cases, your employer can't legally fire you because of your pregnancy. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) prohibits any company with more than 15 employees from discriminating against someone because they're pregnant.

The PDA states that your employer can't cut your hours, demote, or fire you just because you're expecting. The act also requires employers to make reasonable workplace accommodations for pregnant women, such as giving them more bathroom breaks if they're needed, or providing a place to sit if a healthcare provider says their patient shouldn't be standing for long periods of time.

Just because they can't do these things, that doesn't mean it still unfortunately won't happen. But, knowing your workplace rights when you're talking to your boss may make you feel more confident about requesting these accommodations, and knowing that legally, you're entitled to them.



Tips for telling your boss you're pregnant

- Tell your boss you're pregnant face-to-face. Whether it's an in-person meeting or on a video call if you're working from home, this gives you a chance to break the news directly, is the clearest way to communicate, and gives you a chance to see your boss' reaction directly.
- Plan to tell your boss before you tell other co-workers, to avoid any chance of your boss hearing about your news through the grapevine. They'll likely appreciate and respect hearing the news directly from you.
- You don't have to have your entire maternity leave plan figured out the second you break the news, but your boss will appreciate hearing that you've given it some thought, and that you're willing to help create a plan for how your duties will be covered while you're away. Later, you can set up separate meetings with your boss and HR to discuss maternity leave logistics, including how much time you're planning to take and when you're planning to start your leave.
- If you know that you won't be coming back after maternity leave, the ethical thing to do is to let your boss know, even though it may mean forfeiting your paid or unpaid leave benefits. That said, if there's any chance you'll return to work, it's smart to leave this option open. It can be hard to predict how you'll feel once you have a baby (and a few months after that) and what your needs as a family will be in terms of time and income.
- Be professional and confident. Though it's natural to be nervous about how your boss or coworkers will react, try not to feel guilty about your pregnancy announcement. Let your boss know you're happy about this news, and that you value your relationship with your company.