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- Email customerservice@OccupationalTherapy.com
Pregnancy & the Workplace

By: Pawan Preet Kaur, M.S, OTR/L, ATP

Disclaimer

- Pregnancy without any medical complications
- Consult with your OB/GYN
Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to identify legal rights for expecting mothers at a workplace
2. Participants will be able to identify biofeedback during pregnancy in relation to safe workplace performance
3. Participants will be able to identify ergonomic strategies to maximize safe work performance

Research

“Pregnancy discrimination is most prevalent in the hiring practices of a corporation.”

Know Your Rights at the Workplace!

Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA)

- Prohibits employers from discriminating against a woman because she is pregnant
- Women affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions are to be treated same for all employment

https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/pregnancy.cfm
PDA

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Unlawful sex discrimination
- Also, applies to employment agencies and to labor organizations, as well as, to the federal government
- Employers with 15 or more employees, including state and local governments

Is pregnancy a disability?
Pregnancy

- Pregnancy is not a disability

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a person with a disability as a person who has a “physical or mental condition that substantially limits one or more major life activity.”

https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/pregnancy.cfm

Pregnancy Discrimination and Temporarily Disabled

- Equivalent opportunities compared to other temporarily disabled employee
- Impairments resulting from disability
Pregnancy & Harassment

- Harassment due to pregnancy is illegal at workplace

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

- 50 or more employees
- Breast milk expression
- Breast milk location
- Coverage and compensation

https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs73.htm
Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)

- Provide workplace free from hazards
- Provide facts to employers regarding harmful agents
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

- 12 workweeks of unpaid leave (can not exceed)
- Return to same job or equivalent job
- Dads can also use FMLA during pregnancy to care for spouses

To qualify:
- 50 or more employees
- Worked for at least 12 months
- Have worked at least 1,250 hours during
Body changes affecting work performance

Changes in the Body

- Loosening of the Joints
- Weight gain/Balance
- Heart rate
- Hormonal
- Frequent urination
- Self image
Biofeedback

“Biofeedback involves the monitoring and use of physiologic information to teach patients to modify specific physiologic functions.”

Biofeedback

- Abnormal vital signs
- Sudden loss of balance
- Diaphoresis

Managing Signs & Symptoms at Workplace

- Fatigue
- Morning sickness
- Frequent hunger/thirst
- Emotional changes including pregnancy related stress
- Hot flashes
- Forgetfulness ...(aka “mommy brain”)
- Pain (lower back pain, cramps in calves)
- Swelling in legs and feet
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
ERGONOMIC STRATEGIES AT WORKPLACE

Back Pain

During pregnancy alone, the incidence of back pain is reported by 50–80% of women. In a study by Stapleton et al. 61.8% of women who reported low back pain during pregnancy claimed the pain was at least moderately severe, 9% claimed they were completely disabled by pain.

Safe Environment

- Heavy lifting, climbing, carrying, long period of standing
- Be aware of any harmful chemicals at worksite.
- Factories Dry cleaners, electronics, or printing, hobbies such as painting, pottery
- Comfortable attire
- Handwashing

Tips for Lower Back Pain

- Proper footwear
- Exercise and yoga
- Do not bend at the waist to pick up something
- Get off your feet
- Proper furniture
- Abdominal support garment
- Hot/cold packs
- Avoid prolonged standing and heavy lifting
Activities to Avoid

- Downhill snow skiing
- Avoid high altitudes
- In-line skating
- Horseback Riding
- Water skiing, surfing, diving, scuba diving
- Contact sports or badminton, tennis, racquetball

Resources

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) www.osha.org
- National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) www.cdc.gov/niosh/
- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) www.dol.gov/whd/fmla
- Wage and Hour Division (WHD) 1-866-487-9243
Can I be fired for filing a complaint against my employer if I believe she or he has violated the Pregnancy Discrimination Act?

References


Questions?

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