Working In Pregnancy

To produce this guide, I have utilized data supplied by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, I trust you will find it useful

In uncomplicated pregnancies, work is not associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes.

Strenuous work, extended work ( more than 40 hours a week ) and shift work may be associated with a modest increase in low birth weight, prematurity and spontaneous abortions.

Women, therefore, should be screened early in the pregnancy regarding their type of work and advised to modify such activities, if possible.

Pregnant women should avoid significant exposure to chemical solvents, and metal fumes. They should follow current guidelines for handling anti-neoplastic agents and exposure to radiation.

To define strenuous work the American Medical Association (AMA) Council on Scientific Affairs has issued guidelines for continuation of various levels of work during pregnancy. These recommended limiting:

1) after 20 weeks

• repetitive stooping and bending (>10 times per hour)

• repetitive climbing of ladders/poles (>3 times/8-hour shift)

• repetitive lifting (>23 kg)

2) after 24 weeks

• prolonged standing (>4 hours)

• lifting 11 to 23 kg

3) after 28 weeks

• repetitive stair climbing (>3 times/shift)

• intermittent stooping, bending, and ladder climbing

4) after 30 weeks

• intermittent heavy lifting

5) after 32 weeks

• standing over 30 minutes per hour

These guidelines are for otherwise healthy women.

These "work during pregnancy guidelines" are an example of how to guage strenuous work in pregnancy.

With these exceptions, employment may be continued to term. In addition, the council recommends careful evaluations to determine if work should be continued by women who have a number of medical conditions or prior obstetric adverse outcomes or complications. These guidelines are in keeping with the earlier recommendations of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, and can be used as a reference when advising women on medical leave from work during pregnancy.