

Harmful and Helpful Notes for Pregnant and Lactating Patients Seeking Workplace Accommodations

Patient Problem	Harmful Note	Helpful Note
Lifting or bending required at work	<i>Ms. A should not lift more than ten pounds or perform activities that require bending.</i>	<i>Ms. A can continue to perform most functions of her job while pregnant. She has a pregnancy-related back condition that requires her to limit lifting to no more than twenty pounds twice per hour.</i>
Can't check blood sugars at work	<i>Ms. B needs to be able to check her blood glucose at work.</i>	<i>Ms. B has a pregnancy-related medical condition that requires her to monitor her blood glucose level with a simple test and to eat small snacks every two-three hours. She will need a private space in which to check her glucose.</i>
Stressful work environment	<i>Ms. C needs to be kept in a stress-free environment during this pregnancy.</i>	<i>[Discuss ways in which Ms. C could reduce stress without making a formal accommodations request, which should be reserved for pregnancy-related impairments and/or any mental health diagnoses.]</i>
Too tired to work full-time	<i>Ms. D must have reduced work hours during this pregnancy.</i>	<i>Ms. D has clinically significant fatigue related to her pregnancy. She can continue to work with at least fifty percent of her time at work spent seated and fifteen minute breaks every four hours.</i>
Needs breaks to express breast milk at work	<i>Ms. E requires periodic breaks to express breast milk.</i>	<i>Ms. E is a lactating mother, and she must express breast milk using a breast pump every two or three hours to prevent decreased milk supply, painful engorgement, and harmful infection. She is able to perform all of the functions of her job, but requires a thirty-minute break every three hours and a private, clean, and secure space in which to express breast milk.</i>

Adapted from the appendix to Rebecca A. Jackson et al., *My Obstetrician Got Me Fired: How Work Notes Can Harm Pregnant Patients and What To Do About It*, 126 *OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY* 250 (2015), and from CENTER FOR WORKLIFE LAW, *SAMPLE LACTATION ACCOMMODATION WORK NOTE*, <https://www.pregnantatwork.org/wp-content/uploads/Sample-Lactation-Accommodation-Note.docx> (last visited Sept. 27, 2017).