

Time Away from Work After Your Pregnancy Loss

The information in this handout is for parents who have experienced pregnancy loss within the first 19 weeks

After a loss it can be difficult to access and understand information that will support you and your family, which includes information about taking time off from work. Being away from your job can allow you to grieve, heal physically, access healthcare and/or support services, and make arrangements (eg. funeral, financial, travel). The decision to go on a leave from work will depend on many factors including what you are eligible for, what you can afford financially, and your personal loss experience. It is important to remember that you may be eligible for more than one type of leave benefit and to explore all of the options that apply to your particular situation. You may find it helpful to have a trusted support person, as well as your human resources (HR) representative and/or a Social Worker, assist you in determining how to receive all of the time and financial benefits you are entitled to.

During the days and weeks after your loss it can be quite overwhelming to read, understand, and act on the information in this document. Here is a list of the main points to begin, followed by more detailed information:

- You may be eligible for more than one type of benefit to support your time away from work
- It is often too difficult to explore these options yourself. If this is the case for you, you may want to consider asking a trusted family member or friend to help you
- If you require time off from work at any point before, during, or after your loss due to any associated medical issues (including emotional or psychological distress) you can request written documentation from a care provider to support you in doing so
- Many parents will qualify for Employment Insurance (EI) [sickness](#) benefits
- You may be entitled to the Employment Standards Act (ESA) [personal emergency leave \(PEL\)](#)
- There may be other types of time off available from your employer's HR and/or insurance policies
- For assistance or clarification about your options for time away from work contact [Employment Standards Act \(ESA\)](#), [Service Canada - Employment insurance \(EI\)](#), your HR representative, or another support person (eg. Social Worker)

Employment Insurance (EI) Benefits

The EI program (Government of Canada) provides special benefits to workers who take time off work due to specific life events. If you have experienced a miscarriage within the first 19 weeks of your pregnancy you may be eligible for [sickness benefits](#), which provide up to 15 weeks of temporary financial assistance to employees who are unable to work because of a health issue. To qualify you must meet certain [criteria](#) and have a [health care provider](#) complete the [Medical Certificate for Employment Insurance Sickness Benefits](#). To find out if you are eligible, you are asked to [apply online](#). To speak with someone directly about any questions you may have, please call 1-800-206-7218 (TTY: 1-800-529-3742) or access the nearest [Service Canada office](#).

The Employment Standards Act (ESA)

In Ontario the Employment Standards Act (ESA) provides standards as well as rights and responsibilities for most employees and workplaces, which include how much time off parents are granted after the loss of their pregnancy. The information below is based on the [ESA guidelines](#).

Under the ESA you and/or your partner may be entitled to [personal emergency leave \(PEL\)](#), which provides 10 days of job-protected leave each calendar year due to illness, injury, death, and certain emergencies and urgent matters. At this time, employees who have experienced miscarriage or stillbirth more than 17 weeks before their due date (approx. 23 weeks or less pregnant) are not eligible for the ESA pregnancy or parental leave.

Other Types of Leave/Time Off

In addition to EI benefits and ESA entitlements you may be eligible for time off, with or without pay, based on your employer's policies. Options that may be available to support your time away from work include sick time, short-term disability (STD), and long-term disability (LTD). Again, this will depend on your particular workplace policies and insurance plan. Your employer might also decide to provide you with time off due to unforeseen or exceptional circumstances, which may not be fully represented within

their existing policies. Asking your HR representative or a Social Worker to help you explore these options is a good place to start.