



Benefits You May Be Eligible For During Pregnancy (and after baby is born)

While there are many known and unknown factors that influence a woman's ability to carry a healthy baby to term, there is some evidence in the medical literature that job factors related to working as a flight attendant such as **exposure to radiation, circadian rhythm disruption, and exposure to pesticides or other chemicals**, may have an adverse effect. You can request a free copy of AFA's Reproductive Health Information packet to share with your obstetrician (Judith@AFASeattle.org or 206-932-6237).

Unlike in Europe, pregnant crewmembers in the US do not have the option to report their pregnancy and be assured either time off with pay or a ground job with the same pay for the remainder of their pregnancy.

Without these options, even a woman who would prefer not to fly when pregnant cannot afford to lose her income during her pregnancy. Few women are lucky enough to have alternate sources of family income, and even then money gets tight.

The first thing you need to do is review your AFA contract for any leave provisions. The purpose of this memo is to draw your attention to some specifics that may be included in your contract and to suggest some additional sources of income that you may be eligible for when pregnant and/or after baby is born.

1. You may be eligible to draw benefits from a **disability plan** if one is provided under your employment contract and you are a plan participant. Contact your **AFA benefits and insurance chairperson** to find out if such a plan is available to you. You may also have access to a disability plan through your spouse or domestic partner. You may have to have been added to the plan during an open enrollment period prior to being eligible for benefits. Check your contract.
2. Some flight attendants chose to use **sick time** during/after pregnancy, but your airline may impose limits on this. Check your contract.
3. The federal **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** guarantees most workers the right to six months off without losing their job, but it is typically without pay, and FMLA does not usually apply to flight attendants because of the minimum work hours required for coverage. Some AFA contracts create a FMLA-like benefit for flight attendants. Check your contract.
4. There are **state-based temporary disability insurance (TDI) programs** for which pregnant women are eligible. The following jurisdictions have mandatory TDI programs for workers: California, Hawaii, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. There are **other state programs** that might assist you as well. Contact your state disability, welfare, or health department to find out if there are programs for which you are eligible.
5. If you continue to fly, you can minimize circadian rhythm disruption, exposure to high levels of radiation over the poles, and pesticide exposure by avoiding long-haul international trips if you have the seniority to do so.
6. It is important that you do not fly during **solar particle events**, especially if you are pregnant. These only happen two or three times each year and the Space Environment Center advertises them in real time on their website at http://sec.noaa.gov/rt_plots/pro_3d.html You will want to check this website as close to your flight as possible, such as just before you leave for the airport. If the green line on the graph is elevated above the line that is marked "10 to the zero", then a solar particle event that may be of health significance is underway.

For more information, visit AFA's radiation and reproductive health pages via <http://ashsd.afacwa.org> listed under the "health" tab on the left side of your screen. Or contact AFA's Judith Murawski at Judith@AFASeattle.org or 206-932-6237.