

Pregnancy and Call

Pregnant resident physicians are not required to perform call duties, or any shifts past midnight, once they reach their 28th week of gestation as per Article 9.03 (d) of the Resident Physician Collective Agreement:

Unless the Resident Physician otherwise chooses after consideration, she will not be required to perform on-call duties nor scheduled shifts in excess of twelve (12) hours in a day or between 2400 hours and 0600 hours once she has completed twenty-seven (27) weeks of gestation, or earlier if a valid medical reason is provided pursuant to the Letter of Understanding re: Accommodation in Training Due to Medical Limitations. This will not in itself necessarily incur any reduction in remuneration.

Moreover, should pregnant resident physicians have a health-related reason for being absent from work during their pregnancy, they may be eligible for Sick and Special Leave as per Article 9.03 (c).

When you are planning for your maternity leave, keep in mind the research and recommendations around pregnancy. The Alberta Perinatal Health Program's consensus is that heavy lifting and prolonged standing are associated with "increased risk of preterm labour, preterm birth, low birth weight, or a small for gestational (SGA) infant." Heavy lifting is defined as repetitive lifting or carrying or lifting greater than 23 kg and excessive standing or walking is defined as standing for greater than three to four hours a day. Furthermore, the Program insists that "eliminating heavy lifting by the 20th week of pregnancy, and eliminating excessive standing by the 24th week of pregnancy restores the risk of adverse perinatal outcomes to those of unexposed women"¹. Based on these factors, pregnant resident physicians should consider meeting with their programs as soon as possible to discuss how these risks can be mitigated and what their leave requirements may be.

For more information, visit the Alberta Perinatal Health Program's website and find their [Guide and Resource for Prenatal Care Providers](#):

<http://www.aphp.ca/pdf/APRGuide%20and%20ResourceWeb%20PDF.pdf>

PARA recommends that the best way to manage call expectations during a pregnancy is through early discussion and planning with your program. Contact the PARA office if you wish to discuss this issue further.