

# Pregnancy timeline

A week-by-week countdown of important dates in your pregnancy.



## Arranging leave

**You are pregnant**  
Read your contract and employer policies as soon as you can.

Think about when you want to start your maternity leave.



**Week 0**  
'Your due date' as stated in your MATB1.

**Week 4**  
If you are off sick for a pregnancy-related reason during the four weeks before your baby is due, your employer could require you to start your maternity leave.

**Week 11**  
This will be the earliest you can start your maternity leave.

If your partner wants to take paternity or shared parental leave they must also inform their employer. It is also the latest you can **tell your employer** when you are planning to start your maternity leave.

**Week 20**  
You will get your MATB1 shortly.



**Week 22 to Week 15**  
This is the 8 week period used to calculate average weekly earnings\*\* for SMP\* and 'full pay' for NHS terms and conditions.

**Week 15**  
'The 'qualifying week'. You can get SMP if you have been employed by the same employer for 26 weeks by the end of this week and meet minimum earnings rules.

**Week 11**  
To obtain NHS maternity pay you need to have 12 months' continuous service with one or more NHS employers **by Week 11\*\*\***.

## Calculating pay

Weeks in the above timeline run Sunday to Saturday.

\*Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). \*\* It is the pay that is received during this period that is used for the calculation. If overtime or unsocial hours are worked but the money is received after this period then it wouldn't be included. \*\*\*Breaks of three months or less will be disregarded.

This is a visual guide for maternity leave and pay. Please see our maternity toolkit for detailed information. [rcn.org.uk/get-help/rcn-advice/maternity-toolkit](https://rcn.org.uk/get-help/rcn-advice/maternity-toolkit)