



# ENVIRONMENT



## The world around you and your baby

At no other time are you as aware of the things around you as when you want to become pregnant. You think about what's in the air, in your house cleaners, in the photocopy toners at work—even in a can of hairspray.

*Before* you get pregnant, you and your partner need to take a closer look at the hazards that may be in your home, workplace and where you spend leisure time. Exposure of men or women to hazards can make it more difficult to get pregnant, and could cause problems during the pregnancy.

### *Sniff out the hazards*

Most studies on the effects of chemicals, gases or noise on sperm, eggs and the developing baby are still ongoing. When science can't be certain, caution is your best approach. You need to know what part of your environment could affect your health and the health of your future children. Scan your environment to see how many of these items you come in contact with regularly. You can make your own checklist of the things you may want to avoid before your pregnancy and during your pregnancy in order to ensure you are the healthiest parents and have the healthiest baby possible.

markers  
computers X-rays  
photocopy toner  
correction fluid  
microwaves  
noises

fungus  
pollen bacteria  
viruses (rubella)  
allergens mould  
heat dust

smoke  
deodorizers  
hairstyling products  
aerosol sprays  
insect repellents

gases  
formaldehyde  
dry cleaning chemicals  
CO<sub>2</sub> cat litter  
pesticides

### *A day in my life...*

I need to understand that every day could bring some of the chemicals or agents on the hazards list into my life. I will try to stay away from those so that I don't risk the health of a future pregnancy. I will also ask certain questions so I can make an action plan.

### *Do I know enough about a hazard?*

If I don't have enough information I can find out more through the "Help is Close to Home" section.

Other ways to get the information I need are....

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### *Can I avoid a hazard completely?*

Ask...

- ❖ Can the task be done another way, without using the harmful agent?
- ❖ Can someone who is not planning a pregnancy do the task for me?
- ❖ Can my home, workplace or hobbies be set up differently to stop the harmful effects?
- ❖ What can I do to keep from bringing the hazard home to my partner?



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*If I can't remove the hazard, can I limit the problem?*

Ask...

- ❖ Does the task really need to be done regularly?
- ❖ Can I use special equipment such as gloves and protective clothing to protect myself from the hazard?
- ❖ Can I use less of the agent and still get the job done?
- ❖ Can the workplace be set up differently to reduce harm?

My plans to cut back on hazards are...

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You are the only one who really knows what type of environment you spend your time in every day. You are the best one to make a checklist of possible hazards and talk about possible hazards with the health contacts available to help you. Start now – *before* you get pregnant.

## FOR HELP CLOSE TO HOME CONTACT:

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System: 1-800-461-4383

Motherisk Home Line: 416-813-6780 or [www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org)

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety: 1-800-263-8466 or [www.ccohs.ca](http://www.ccohs.ca)

Occupational Health Clinic for Ontario Workers: 416-449-0009 or [www.ohcow.on.ca](http://www.ohcow.on.ca)

## FOR HELP AT WORK CONTACT:

Material Safety Data Sheets at your workplace: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Assistance Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupational Health Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_

Health and Safety Representative: \_\_\_\_\_