

Maternity & parental leave and pay

Advice sheet

For members planning for, or currently on, maternity or parental leave.

Key rights

- **Leave entitlement:** You are entitled to up to 52 weeks of maternity leave.
- **Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP):** Paid for up to 39 weeks if you meet the eligibility criteria. Many NHS-employed dietitians may also be eligible for enhanced Occupational Maternity Pay.
- **Right to return:** You have the right to return to the same job (if taking 26 weeks or less) or a similar job with the same terms (if taking more than 26 weeks).

Steps for BDA members

1. **Notify your employer:** You must tell your employer you are pregnant and when you want your leave to start at least 15 weeks before your due date.
2. **Health and safety:** Your employer must carry out a risk assessment of your working environment (e.g., exposure to certain chemicals or heavy lifting in a clinical setting).
3. **Switch to the "Parental leave" membership:** BDA parental leave membership ([check your eligibility here](#)) offers a 50% discount for up to 12 months, allowing you to retain the same benefits and importantly ensures that you continue to have access to vital BDA Trade Union support, should any employment-related matters arise during your leave period, including restructures, redundancies, sickness or your right to return.