



CHAPTER 10: KNOW YOUR MATERNITY RIGHTS

All pregnant women have maternity rights and choices. It is important that you know them, so you can make informed decisions and get the care you need.

THE FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

This law requires employers of 50 or more employees to allow both women and men to take time off — up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected time — during any 12 month period for the birth or adoption of a child. It provides the same time off for women and men to care for a family member or if the employee has a serious health condition.

DISABILITY

Discrimination against you because you are pregnant, or because you have a medical condition or disability that is related to being pregnant, is against the law. To get more information call the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at 1-800-669-4000 (TTY 1-800-669-6820) or visit www.eeoc.gov/offices.html

THE RIGHT TO BREASTFEED

Under North Carolina law, a woman may breastfeed in any public or private location. It is not a problem if a nipple is uncovered (shows) while getting ready or finishing up breastfeeding.

AN EMPLOYER CANNOT REFUSE TO HIRE YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE PREGNANT

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act states that an employer cannot refuse to hire a pregnant woman because of her pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions or because other co-workers, clients or customers think she shouldn't work. It is illegal for employers to ask you if you're pregnant during a job interview.



**PAYING
FOR
YOUR
PREGNANCY:
KNOW YOUR
OPTIONS!**



No matter what healthcare provider you choose, make sure you feel comfortable and have good communication.

Community Clinics – cost for services is based on your ability to pay (sliding-scale).

Health Departments – offer many prenatal visits at no or little cost based on your income. You may need to pay for special services on a sliding-scale fee based on documented income. No one is denied services based only on ability to pay.

Presumptive Medicaid – Health Departments offer temporary Medicaid to cover pregnancy-related expenses on the assumption that you are eligible to receive Medicaid for Pregnant Women. This coverage only lasts for two months, the month that you apply and the next.

Medicaid for Pregnant Women (MPW) – The family income limit for a pregnant woman to receive Medicaid is equal to 185% of the poverty level.

MPW covers:

- all your prenatal visits and other examinations recommended by your medical provider.
- prescription medicines.
- transportation to the clinic if needed.
- childbirth classes.
- Maternity Care Coordination.
- delivery and hospital expenses.
- 6 weeks of medical care for the mother after giving birth.
- birth control.

Health Check (for baby) – If you have MPW coverage, your newborn is automatically eligible for Medicaid (Health Check) up to age 1 and may be eligible after age 1.



Emergency Medicaid – If you don't have health insurance you may qualify for Emergency Medicaid. It can pay for all of your delivery related expenses. Your local department of social services determines the eligibility coverage dates.

Private Health Insurance – See if your insurance covers maternity expenses or if you can add coverage. Check with your insurance agent or human resources where you work for complete information on coverage and deductibles.



THE SAFE SURRENDER LAW: FOR WOMEN IN CRISIS

North Carolina law allows a woman who has given birth to surrender the baby legally, and without questions, to a responsible adult within the first seven days after birth.

For more information call 1-800-367-2229.

WHAT IS HIPAA?

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a patient rights act. It protects your medical history and treatment information from being shared by your medical provider. Your provider's office, urgent care center or hospital cannot release information about your physical or mental health to your employer, any private agency or individual without your knowledge and without first obtaining your written consent. HIPAA is pronounced hip-ah.



A WORD ABOUT BIRTH CERTIFICATES

All births are required to be registered in the county and state where the baby was born. You will receive a form at your hospital to record your baby's name. You can ask for a form to request a Social Security number for your baby. Make sure all the information is spelled correctly. If you are not married and want the father's name on the birth certificate, he needs to sign a paternity form at the hospital.



WHAT IF YOUR BABY IS A BOY?

During your pregnancy you should decide if you want a boy circumcised. This is a surgical operation to remove the loose fold of skin covering the tip of the penis (**circumcision**). Ask your healthcare provider for material to read on circumcision so you can make an informed decision ahead of time. Also, ask the hospital where you will deliver about their fees and regulations for circumcising babies.