

# USAF Active Duty



## Pregnancy & Post-partum Guide

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This document is for informational purposes. It is intended to empower newly expectant mothers (and supervisors) navigate different facets of pregnancy and postpartum life while being Active Duty (USAF). This guide was put together through volunteer efforts by reading policies, memorandums, and personal experience. It is not officially endorsed by the USAF and should not be used as official policy. As a guide, the intent is only to clarify and guide, not to replace official guidance. As always one should seek official military guidance from respective Chain of Commands and Base SMEs.

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### **Pregnancy Confirmation/Profile**

If you suspect or think you are pregnant the first step is to order an official (blood) test to confirm pregnancy. Many MTF have walk-ins daily where they can order labs the same day. Call your PCM/Med group to establish pregnancy.

Once your labs get drawn and come back confirmed you will receive a 469 profile and prenatal counseling explaining the limitations of your profile. During this time, you can discuss any work-related hazards concerns you may have and get them documented on your profile.

Many women wonder if and when half days are authorized for more advanced stages of pregnancy. Half-days are not mandated per any regulation at any time during pregnancy and many women work up until their labor, however, many women have had success working with their supervisors and work centers allowing them to work reduced hours. Half-days may be officially authorized by your OB or PCM with a medical justification. For example, a high-risk pregnancy or medical complications. Authorization to wear sneakers in lieu of boots should also be noted on the profile and is not automatically granted or mandated at any time during pregnancy.

- **AFI 48-133, Duty Limiting Conditions**  
⇒ [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_sg/publication/afi48-133/afi48-133.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_sg/publication/afi48-133/afi48-133.pdf)

## Assignment Codes

Confirming pregnancy, you should be loaded an Assignment Available Code 81. You should feel encouraged to check you are coded correctly by viewing your SURF on AMS. This code doesn't mean you can't PCS or be picked up for assignment. Your code 81 will expire 12 weeks after your child's EDD. You are eligible to PCS CONUS 12-weeks before or 12-weeks after Expected Delivery Date.

Post-partum you will be loaded with Assignment Limitation Code A (Post Delivery Deferment) which will expire 12 months after your child's birth date. This code means you are eligible for an assignment however the RNLTD will be no earlier than the Code A expiration date for unaccompanied short tours/deployments. This code is waivable by the member. **You should NOT have AAC 31 loaded against you strictly for post-partum.**

AFI 36-2110, Total Force Assignments

⇒ [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_a1/publication/afi36-2110/afi36-2110.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-2110/afi36-2110.pdf)

## Entitlements during Pregnancy

You are entitled to a Maternity Uniform Allowance to be paid out once within a 3-year period (enlisted only). You can take or email your profile to your First Sergeant and in turn they will provide a memorandum. You will be briefed on that allowance and will take that memo to Finance so they can process your payment. You can wear your Maternity Uniform as soon or as late in pregnancy as you desire. There is no "correct" time to start wearing it.

- **FY2020 Military Clothing Allowances:**

⇒ <https://www.dfas.mil/MilitaryMembers/payentitlements/Pay-Tables/CMA7/>

- **DoD 7000.14-R, Financial Management Regulation Volume 7A, Chapter 29**

⇒ [https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/documents/fmr/current/07a/07a\\_29.pdf](https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/documents/fmr/current/07a/07a_29.pdf)

## Ordering a Breast Pump

With TRICARE, a mother is entitled to receive a breast pump of choice. There are different ways in which you can choose to get yours. You must be 27 weeks pregnant to apply and receive it.

1. You can purchase a pump of choice and get reimbursed by TRICARE by filing a claim. Many women choose this route when they want a hands-free option like the Willow, Elvie, or Freemie to recoup some of the costs (approx. \$300 reimbursement).
2. You can go through an online company who will contact your medical team on your behalf or upload your prescription and you can choose your pump. They will send it to your home. Some common ones are Aeroflow, Baby Pavilion, and 1 Natural Way.

⇒ <https://tricare.mil/breastpumps>

- **Online Breast Pump Ordering:**

⇒ <https://aeroflowbreastpumps.com/>

⇒ <https://www.babypavilion.com/>

⇒ <https://www.militarypumps.com/>

- **Bank Donor Breast Milk** is also covered under special circumstances:

⇒ <https://www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/IsItCovered/BankedDonorMilk>

## Unit PT/Physical Fitness during pregnancy

There is no mandated maternity PT gear, however most women continue to wear their PT Uniform until they outgrow it. Pregnant members participating in unit PT, may be authorized to wear civilian clothing in the colors of blue, black, white or grey. Commanders determine the required PTG configuration during organized PT events.

Being on pregnancy profile does not exempt you from organized PT sessions, however most organizations & leadership are accommodating in letting pregnant Airmen "PT on their own."

Many Fitness Centers are starting to roll out specifically tailored Prenatal and Postpartum group fitness classes with other service members. See if your local FSS has any programs available if you would like fitness accountability and a program more tailored to pregnant women or those who are recovering.

✦ **Everyone's bodies react differently throughout pregnancy. No one pregnancy is the same and symptoms such as tiredness, morning sickness, nerve and joint pain, etc. can have large impact on your normal endurance, energy and overall fitness. It is important you keep an open line of communication with your supervisor and leadership if you are struggling and may need extra accommodations for your PT routine. If your profile is not adequate enough, you may need to re-engage your PCM to update it to your current limitations.**

## Finding Childcare

If you plan to return to work after birth, many recommend getting on a child care waitlist as soon as possible because waitlist can be quite long. Depending on your total family income or location it may benefit your family to seek childcare on post vs off post.

**Apply for the CDC and FCC (on base providers):**

⇒ <https://militarychildcare.csd.disa.mil/mccf/ui>

**Paying for Childcare Assistance:**

There are multiple programs and assistance funds for paying for military childcare depending on your family situation. See if you qualify for any special assistance programs.

⇒ <https://childcare.gov/consumer-education/paying-for-childcare>

⇒ <https://childcare.gov/index.php/consumer-education/military-child-care-fee-assistance-programs>

## Applying for Separation During Pregnancy

*Members who were pregnant at the time of enlistment or entry into active service are not eligible for separation under this paragraph and are not entitled to maternity care in military facilities after their separation.*

You may apply for a separation date prior to the birth of your child. If the request for separation is prior to the (expected) birth of your child, the separation date will be before the birth of the child.

- CONUS: Requested date of separation is no earlier than 90 days and not later than 30 days prior to the expected date of delivery
- OCONUS: Requested separation date must be prior to the 25th week of pregnancy due to travel restrictions
- If applying for separation while pregnant, requests must include an AF Form 469, Duty Limiting Condition Report, confirming the pregnancy
- You will apply for separation via the vMPF and provide your AF Form 469, *Duty Limiting Condition Report*, confirming the pregnancy

- **MyPers, Applying for Voluntary Separation - Pregnancy Policy Change**  
⇒ [https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/34101/kw/separation/p/10](https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/34101/kw/separation/p/10)
- **AFI 36-3208, Administrative Separation of Airmen**  
⇒ [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_a1/publication/afi36-3208/afi36-3208.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-3208/afi36-3208.pdf)
- **AFI 36-3207, Separating Commissioned Officers**  
⇒ [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_a1/publication/afi36-3207/afi36-3207.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-3207/afi36-3207.pdf)

## Maternity Leave

What most people consider maternity leave is now broken down to 2 types of leave. The first is Convalescent Leave which is 6 weeks (42 days) intended for the recovering mother. It is to be taken and starts the day after discharge from the hospital. The second part is Primary Care Giver leave which is another 6 weeks (42 days) of leave intended for care and bonding. These types of leave Do NOT have to be taken back to back, however most women choose to take them in consecutive order to complete a 12 week leave period.

- Convalescent Maternity Leave begins the first full day following the date of discharge or release from the hospital and is only authorized to be taken by the birth mother. You will apply via LeaveWeb under Convalescent type and upload supporting documents (discharge paperwork). This can be done remotely at home or by supervisors.
- Primary Care Giver Leave may be taken by either parent (if spouse is AD) but most woman who gave birth choose to take it. It has to be taken within the first 12 months of the child's birth. Apply via LeaveWeb under PTDY Rule 18.
- Secondary Care Giver leave is intended for service members who meet the definition of, and are designated as, "secondary caregivers" and it is 21 days of non-chargeable leave. To be taken within the first 12 months after the child's birth. Apply via LeaveWeb under PTDY Rule 19.

### AFI 36-3003, Military Leave Program

⇒ [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_a1/publication/afi36-3003/afi36-3003.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-3003/afi36-3003.pdf)

### Military Parental Leave Program Key Points:

⇒ [https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/38747](https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/38747)

## Baby Blues/ Postpartum Depression/ Postpartum Anxiety

The days following your child's birth may be some of the most overwhelming days and weeks of your life. Even with a good support system it is absolutely normal and natural to feel emotional, overwhelmed, exhausted, and like are questioning many things. Your hormones are regulating, your body is healing from delivery, and depending if you chose to breastfeed or not your body will try to establish and regulate your breastmilk supply. For some with traumatic births or c sections the recovery can be that much more complicated. Caring for a baby who needs so much attention and care while your body heals can take a physical and emotional toll no matter how much you love them.

Please know you are not alone! Approximately 70% to 80% of women will experience, at a minimum, the 'baby blues. Many of these women will experience the more severe conditions of postpartum depression (PPD) or postpartum anxiety (PPA). And that is just the woman who come forward to get a diagnosis, as many will suffer in silence.

*See chart below for common symptoms.*

*This chart is not intended to formally diagnose and should be used for informational purposes only. You may have symptoms in multiple “categories” but it doesn’t necessarily mean you have the condition(s). Always consult your medical provider for an official screening, diagnosis, and treatments.*

Baby Blues	PPD Symptoms	PPA Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crying for no reason</li> <li>• Crying from feeling sadness or overwhelmed</li> <li>• Irritability</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Poor concentration</li> <li>• Not bonding with your baby immediately</li> <li>• Appetite problems</li> <li>• Sleeping problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling hopeless/depressed</li> <li>• Excessive Crying</li> <li>• Feeling like you “made a mistake”</li> <li>• Feelings of not being “good enough”</li> <li>• Severe mood swings</li> <li>• Overwhelming fatigue</li> <li>• Insomnia</li> <li>• Feeling lost/disconnected</li> <li>• Extreme feelings of guilt</li> <li>• Thoughts of running away and leaving your family behind</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronically Worrying</li> <li>• Fears of hurting your baby or something bad happening to him or her</li> <li>• Fears and racing thoughts of your baby’s safety</li> <li>• Fears of being left alone with your baby</li> <li>• Uneasy feelings around knives or weapons</li> <li>• Feeling a sense of dread or like “something bad is going to happen”</li> </ul>

**!! Please seek immediate medical help if you are thinking about harming yourself or your baby !!**



Created by Karen Kleiman and Molly McIntyre for The Postpartum Stress Center [postpartumstress.com](http://postpartumstress.com)

✿ Many women find it helpful talking about their feelings and fears during this time of adjustment by connecting to other mothers either in person or in online circles. There are many blogs, websites, and testimonials online to help you realize that you are not alone. You should feel encouraged to reach out to medical professionals or friends to help you cope. Your PCM may also be able to prescribe you anti-depressant or anti-anxiety drugs to help during this time. There is no shame in being prescribed medication for your mental health, and that should be discussed between you and your Health Care team.

- Facebook PPA Support Group  
⇒ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/PPAsupport/>
- Facebook PPD/PPA Support Group  
⇒ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2275179362722172/>
- PPD Mayo Clinic  
⇒ <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/postpartum-depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20376617>

## Breastfeeding/Pumping Support

For those that continue to feed their baby breastmilk after returning to work, it's important to get on a good pumping schedule. The Air Force has mandated that *“Commanders will identify a private, secure (lockable from the inside) and sanitary area as a lactation room in the immediate vicinity of unit facilities that is available to meet the needs of breastfeeding Service members and civilian employees to breastfeed or express breast milk.”* Additionally, *“AFI 44-102, paragraph 4.15., recommends that supervisors work to arrange the schedules of breastfeeding Service members and civilian employees to allow 15-30 minutes every 3-4 hours to pump breast milk.”*

It is important to know your rights, especially if you feel you are not being provided an adequate pumping environment to continue your pumping journey.

Lastly, if you continue to breastfeed after returning to work many Childcare Centers allow mothers to return during the day (for example, during lunch break) to breastfeed their baby. Many women choose to do this as their baby transitions and adjusts to bottles or for bonding purposes.

- AFI 44-102, Medical Care Management  
⇒ [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_sg/publication/afi44-102/afi44-102.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_sg/publication/afi44-102/afi44-102.pdf)
- Air Force Guidance Memorandum (AFGM) Establishing Requirement of Lactation Rooms for Nursing Mothers  
⇒ [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_a1/publication/afgm2019-36-02/afgm2020-36-01.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afgm2019-36-02/afgm2020-36-01.pdf)

## Newborn Enrollment in DEERS/TRICARE

Newborn enrollment to the DEERS should occur as soon as possible, within 30-days ideally. A child's enrollment in DEERS allows for timely medical care access to Military Treatment Facility (MTF) and TRICARE. You will need to take Certified original or copy of the child's birth certificate to your MPF to enroll them. Some MPFs may also require you to bring in their SSN card but your MPF should tell you what they need. After they are enrolled in DEERS you can call your TRICARE region and enroll them in your preferred TRICARE plan.

## Update BAH rate (if applicable)

If your child is your first dependent you will want to update your dependent status so you can receive you appropriate BAH amount w/dependents. You will do this by going to your respective Finance office and bringing your child's certificate. You will be asked to fill out AF Form 594 and your pay will be backdated to your child's birthdate.

## Create/Update Family Care Plan

You are required to have a Family Care plan if you are Mil to Mil, sharing custody, or a single parent. Your first Sergeant should be able to help you with filling it out or assisting you (AF IMT 357).

- **DODI1342.19\_AFI36-2908, Family Care Plans:**
- ⇒ [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_a1/publication/dodi1342.19\\_afi36-2908/dodi1342.19\\_afi36-2908.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/dodi1342.19_afi36-2908/dodi1342.19_afi36-2908.pdf)

## Applying for Separation Post-partum

You can also apply for a separation date after the birth of your child.

- The application must be submitted no later than 12 months after childbirth and the requested date of separation must not be more than 12 months from the date of application
- The earliest date an Airman can submit the application for separation is the day following return to duty from maternity leave
- You will apply for separation via the vMPF and provide proof of childbirth like your baby's Birth Certificate or Doctors Note
  - **MyPers, Applying for Voluntary Separation - Pregnancy Policy Change**  
⇒ [https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/34101/kw/separation/p/10](https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/34101/kw/separation/p/10)
  - **AFI 36-3208, Administrative Separation of Airmen**  
⇒ [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_a1/publication/afi36-3208/afi36-3208.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-3208/afi36-3208.pdf)
  - **AFI 36-3207, Separating Commissioned Officers**  
⇒ [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_a1/publication/afi36-3207/afi36-3207.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-3207/afi36-3207.pdf)

## PT Testing

- Upon return from leave, you must get your Fitness Test Date updated in AFFMS II. Your UFPM will send documentation to Fitness Cell (FSS) to update your new due date to test by the last day of the 12th month of your child's birthdate. On the 1st day of the 13th month after the discharge from the hospital of pregnancy you will be considered "overdue."



## When will I test?

Pregnancy Over 20 weeks	Pregnancy 12-20 weeks	Pregnancy 12 weeks
• Exemption from FA for 365 days	• Exemption from FA for 180 days	• Exemption from FA for up to 60 days

- **AFI 48-133, Duty Limiting Conditions**  
⇒ [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_sg/publication/afi48-133/afi48-133.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_sg/publication/afi48-133/afi48-133.pdf)
- **AFI 36-2905, Fitness Program:**  
⇒ [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_a1/publication/afi36-2905/afi36-2905.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-2905/afi36-2905.pdf)

✦ Fitness Centers across the Air Force are starting to roll out Pregnancy/Post-partum group classes for servicemembers. If you thrive with group classes where you can relate to other women it may be worth asking around if they are available on your Base.

## Diastasis Recti & Pelvic Floor Therapy

- **Diastasis Recti** is partial or complete separation of the rectus abdominis, or “six-pack” muscles, which meet at the midline of your stomach. Diastasis recti is very common during and following pregnancy. If you have this condition you can seek help and treatment through your PCM. They will evaluate your case and you may be referred to receive physical therapy or even surgery depending on the severity and impact on your health.
- **A weakened or dysfunctional pelvic floor** is also a common problem post-partum and can worsen after each pregnancy. It can affect your ability to exercise and recover fully. Common symptoms include leaking urine when coughing, sneezing, laughing or running. Failing to reach the toilet in time. There are exercises one can do to “strengthen” the pelvic floor, however, if no improvement is seen then it is advisable to consult your PCM for an individual evaluation. Treatments such as specialized Physical Therapy, botox injections, or even surgery are available in severe cases and could be covered by TRICARE.
- YouTube has some great resources and guided exercises for pelvic floor strengthening and abdominal strengthening. Talk to your Healthcare team if you have concerns about starting a new exercise routine.

⇒ <https://www.healthline.com/health/diastasis-recti>

⇒ <https://www.healthline.com/health/pelvic-floor-dysfunction#treatment>

## Court-Ordered Child Custody Assignment (CCCA) or Deferment (CCCD) Consideration Program

These USAF programs allow parents the ability to defer an assignment or be stationed near their children with a court-ordered child custody decree. Applicable to officer and enlisted. More details and requirements on MyPers.

**One can apply via MyPers:**

⇒ [https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/48283/p/10/c/20](https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/48283/p/10/c/20)