

Coast Guard Pregnancy and New Parent Resource Guide

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PARENT

Providing Assistance & Resources
to Expectant, New & Toddler Families

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If you are considering starting a family, expecting a baby, or have young children while on Active Duty, there are many resources and Coast Guard policies you need to be familiar with. This is an exciting and very challenging time in your personal life and professional career. This guide is designed to help you navigate the process from pregnancy to early childhood, ensuring you take advantage of all the resources available to you.

Disclaimer: This is an informational product and not an all inclusive document. You should refer to your military chain of command, Coast Guard policy, and health care provider to determine what course of action is best for you and your family.

Think you're pregnant?

If you suspect you are pregnant you should contact your health care provider to set up an appointment to confirm the pregnancy. Once the pregnancy has been confirmed request a referral to an Obstetrician. Depending on your location you may be referred to a military treatment facility or a private physician. Ensure that the doctor you choose accepts your TRICARE plan. Many Coast Guard medical facilities have a referrals specialist who can help you navigate the referral process.

Notify your Command

Inform your supervisor and commanding officer as soon as possible, but no later than two weeks after diagnosis of pregnancy. (reference (a)) Keep your command informed of any duty restrictions and work with your supervisor to develop a plan for the pregnancy that will keep both you and the baby healthy.

TRICARE

TRICARE has recently closed most of its in person service centers, however there is a wealth of knowledge on their website. You can research Obstetricians and Pediatricians, find what out what procedures are covered by your plan, and obtain more information about health plan options. TRICARE has a special link dedicated to having a baby. You can navigate the website and learn more about: prenatal care, labor and delivery, post-partum care, treatment of complications, dental care, newborn care, and well baby care.

<http://tricare.mil/LifeEvents/Baby.aspx>

Getting TRICARE for your child:

After the baby is born you will need to enroll the child in TRICARE. Prior to enrolling in TRICARE, you must register your newborn in DEERS (see below). Once enrolled in DEERS your child will have the same health plan options that you have. TRICARE Standard and Extra coverage is automatic as soon as your child is registered in DEERS. If any family member is

already enrolled in TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Prime Remote, your child is considered enrolled for the first 60 days. If the child is not registered in DEERS within those first 60 days, the coverage will revert to TRICARE Standard and Extra. If you haven't registered your child in DEERS within 365 days, of his/her birth, DEERS will show "loss of eligibility" and your child will no longer be able to receive benefits until he/she is registered in DEERS. This process can be complicated, so check the TRICARE website and ensure you have the correct information for your specific circumstances.

<http://tricare.mil/LifeEvents/Baby/GettingTRICAREforChild.aspx?p=1>

The Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)

Registering your child in DEERS is separate from enrolling your child in any health plan option and is the first step to ensuring your child is eligible for benefits. Before the baby arrives you should ensure your information is correct in DEERS. After the baby arrives you should call your local ID card office to set up and appointment and enroll your child in DEERS. When you call to make the appointment ask what documentation you will need to bring with you. Keep in mind the local ID card office may not be a Coast Guard facility. For DEERS office locations visit:

<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/appj/site?execution=e2s1>

Talk to your Servicing Personnel Office if you have any questions about DEERS. Also ask them if you are eligible for additional benefits. If you are a single parent or married member to member and not receiving with dependent rates, you will also be eligible to receive with dependent basic allowance for housing (BAH) and dependent cost of living allowance (COLA) rates when your child is born. Keep in mind that if you are married member to member only one of you will receive the rate with dependent.

<http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm>

Medical Records

Keep personal records of any medical appointments or tests. Anything done by a non-military provider will not make it into your military health record. These records are important for your own health records, your baby's health, and may also be necessary for determining your VA benefits upon separation or retirement. At the conclusion of your postpartum care or if you change doctors during your pregnancy ask your doctor for a copy of your medical record. There may be a nominal fee for this, but it will be worth having all your information in one place.

Also keep any bills or receipts from your medical providers. Most TRICARE plans cover the majority of your cost during prenatal, labor and delivery, post partum care, and newborn care. However, if there is an issue with the billing or you have a procedure that is not covered, you may be asked by your provider to pay the difference. Contact TRICARE if you have any questions about your billing statements.

State Laws and Requirements

Some states may have unique laws regarding pregnancy and child birth. Certain states require an HIV/AIDS test every trimester, other states require a certain amount of genetic testing be done during pregnancy. You probably won't notice most of the differences, but it's a good idea to talk to your doctor about what laws or requirements may be unique to the state you are in.

Military Assignments and Duty Restrictions

Military Assignments and Duty Restrictions while pregnant vary greatly depending on location, position, and performance of duties. For more information on the factors and risks that apply to your specific situation you will have to do some research. (reference (a), reference (b), reference (c), reference (d), reference (e), and reference (f))

Leave and Authorized Absences

Below are the leave allowances for new parents, which have recently changed as of 02FEB16. Keep in mind that with your Commanding Officer's approval you may use your personal leave in conjunction with this special leave. Some parents choose to return to work immediately after maternity or paternity leave, others choose to take an extra few weeks, still others ease back into the rigors of working parenthood by taking a few days of personal leave during each of the initial weeks back.

Prenatal Maternity Leave: District commanders and commanding officers may grant prenatal medical convalescent leave without the Commandant's approval for prenatal periods up to a cumulative total of 30 days. A medical officer or practicing physician will certify all periods of prenatal leave as necessary. If you are referred to a doctor outside of the military and that individual has identified the need for you to take prenatal medical convalescent leave, have your civilian doctor write you a doctor's note to take back to your command. Most doctors will be happy to oblige and it may help with justifying to your command the need for prenatal medical convalescent leave. (reference (a), (reference (c))

Postnatal Maternity Leave: Postpartum convalescent leave will normally be granted for 84 days after discharge from the medical treatment facility following any uncomplicated vaginal delivery or cesarean section. (Note, postpartum convalescent leave it starts from the day you leave the hospital, not the day the baby is born.) The attending physician may recommend an extension of convalescent leave beyond the standard 84 days based on the service member's clinical circumstances. The service member's command must be notified of this recommendation. Commanding officers may grant this leave without approval from the Commandant. (reference (c), (m))

Paternity Leave: Paternity leave is 10 days of non-chargeable leave authorized for married members on active duty whose spouse gives birth to a child. Paternity leave does not have to be taken immediately after the birth of the child. If you have some particularly helpful house guests after the baby is born, you may choose to wait to start your paternity leave until after they depart. However, the 10 day paternity leave period must be used consecutively and within 90 days of the birth of the child.
(reference (c), (m))

Uniforms

Maternity uniforms may be worn during pregnancy and up to 60 days after returning from maternity leave. (reference (g)) All variations of the Air Force maternity uniform may be worn by pregnant service members when their regular uniform no longer fits. (reference (a)) There are a variety of maternity uniforms that can be purchased from the Coast Guard Uniform Distribution Center. You may also be able to acquire maternity uniforms from your unit's "Lucky Bag" or coworkers who have recently had a baby.

<http://www.uscg.mil/uniform/WomensMaternityUniforms.asp>

There are very few outer wear items that will work once your stomach starts to grow. The Air Force cardigan sweater can be worn open during pregnancy and can be purchased at:

<https://www.shopmyexchange.com/air-force-unisex-cardigan-sweater/3618683>

Enlisted Supplementary Clothing Allowance

Enlisted members only are authorized a onetime allowance to purchase maternity uniforms. The FY2017 rate is \$286.09. For more information visit the PPC website at:

<http://www.uscg.mil/ppc/mas/suppcma.asp>

Weight Standards

Your requirements to comply with weight standards will depend on your delivery date and a variety of other factors, including medical complications.

Pregnancy Exemption: A service member is exempt from compliance with weight and body fat standards during pregnancy. (reference (h))

Post-Birth Exemption: Members under this exemption are required to participate in all weight screenings and have their current weight entered into Direct Access. During this period, members who exceed program standards will be considered compliant. (reference (h))

Members who are pregnant for 20 weeks or longer are exempt from weight and body fat standards for a twelve month period upon completion of pregnancy (delivery, miscarriages, etc.). (reference (n))

Fertility Treatment Exemption: The Coast Guard recognizes that members may undergo physiological changes associated with the side effects of Assisted Reproductive Services (ARS) and male Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) and/or the medications used for ARS/HRT resulting in exceeding body fat standards. Those individuals (male and female) pursuing fertility treatments should review reference (h) and reference (o) for more information on obtaining a waiver.

Breastfeeding and Lactation Support

If you are planning on breastfeeding after returning to work it is important that you communicate that to your Command. Prior to going on maternity leave, work with your Command to set up a plan for expressing your milk or “pumping” during the workday. Keep in mind that everyone expresses milk at a different rate and frequency, so just because another woman in the office can “pump” in 20 minutes and be back at her desk doesn’t mean that your experience will be the same. When possible your Command should provide a lactation facility, cool storage, and lactation breaks. Check to see if there is an existing facility at your unit that can be used. If you travel frequently for work, note the location of lactation facilities at places you visit. If you need to set up a lactation facility from scratch talk to your Command and ensure it meets with the standards set in (reference (a))

TRICARE has recently extended its coverage to breast pumps and certain breast pump supplies. You will need a prescription from a TRICARE-authorized physician, physicians assistant, nurse practitioner, or nurse midwife to receive coverage. Your prescription should state what type of breast pump you need. This new coverage is retroactive to December 19, 2014. If you paid out of pocket you can send a claim for reimbursement to TRICARE along with a prescription for the breast pump and itemized receipt from your purchase. You can find out more about how to obtain a breast pump at no cost or reimbursement for a previously purchased breast pump via the TRICARE website.

http://www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/IsItCovered/BreastPumpsSupplies.aspx?sc_database=web

TRICARE has also expanded its coverage of breastfeeding counseling. Breastfeeding or Lactation Consultants can be tremendous assets when you are first learning to breastfeed your little one. Most hospitals will have a Lactation Consultant on staff that will help you with your first few feedings after the baby is born. Many hospitals will also provide a free in home lactation consultation if you are experiencing any difficulties. Talk to your health care provider and TRICARE to see what breastfeeding counseling is covered under your plan.

<http://www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/IsItCovered/BreastfeedingCounseling.aspx>

Child Care

The decision of who will watch your child when you return to work will be one of the most difficult choices of being a new parent. Whether you decide to use a corporate daycare, home

center, nanny, au pair, family member, or child development center, it is important that you do your homework. There are some online resources that may help you locate available child care in your geographic area. CG SUPRT sponsors a Child Care Provider Locator on their website, which enables the user find child care options near them by selecting the type of care desired and geographic location.

<https://www.achievementsolutions.net/achievementsolutions/en/cgsuprt/Home.do> (Find Services>Child Care Services>Child Care Provider Locator)

Child Care Advisors from CG SUPRT are available 24 hours a day to assist with locating child care. Child Care Advisors can be contacted via telephone at 877-853-4706 or by connecting online via LIVECONNECT located on the CGSUPRT website. (More information on CG SUPRT below.)

Child Care Subsidy: The Coast Guard Child Care Subsidy Benefit Program was created to assist Coast Guard members provide child care for their children. Families may qualify for subsidy benefits in accordance with the benefits table, which is based upon their total family income. To determine if you are eligible to receive benefits you must submit an application with the required documents to the Department of Agriculture Child Care Subsidy for Federal Employees program for review. For more information on the application process or the current benefit table visit the Department of Agriculture Child Care Subsidy website below:

https://nfc.usda.gov/FSS/clientservices/Child_Care_Subsidy/subsidies/USCG/index.php

Child Development Center (CDC): The Coast Guard operates several CDCs. Contact the appropriate CDC to find out more information on availability, tuition rates, wait list times, or to schedule a tour of a specific facility. CDCs may have long wait lists for enrollment, so if you are considering using a CDC for child care, contact them as soon as possible. You may need to find backup child care until a spot is available at the CDC. Coast Guard members may also apply for child care at other military bases.

<http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Health-Safety-and-Work-Life-CG-11/Office-of-Work-Life-CG-111/Child-Care/Child-Development-Centers/>

Coast Guard Family Child Care (FCC): FCC is a network of independent entrepreneurs working out of Coast Guard owned housing providing child care for more than ten hours a week for any one child. Providers operate under a Coast Guard Certification of Operation issued by the local Commanding Officer and inspected quarterly by Health Safety and Work-life. Contact your local Health Safety and Work-life Office if you are seeking child care provided by someone living in Coast Guard Housing.

Health Safety and Work-life (HSWL)

All HSWL resources listed below, along with local points of contact can be found on the HSWL website <http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Health-Safety-and-Work-Life-CG-11/Office-of-Work-Life-CG-111/>

CG SUPRT is designed to assist eligible employees and their dependents in addressing personal issues including, but not limited to, marital and family conflict, interpersonal relationship problems, conflict at work, depression or anxiety, help with community resource referrals, career changes, substance abuse, stress management, grieving a loss, personal decision making, and child and eldercare services. Specifically related to parenting issues and child rearing, CG SUPRT provides personalized and prescreened referrals for resources related to child care and parenting, pregnancy and adoption, education, health and wellness. In addition free prenatal, child safety, and health promotion kits may be available. (reference (j))

You can access CG SUPRT 24 hours a day by calling 1-855-CGSUPRT (247-8778) or going to the website at www.CGSUPRT.com

Special Needs Program provides a comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to community support, housing, medical, educational, and personnel services for Coast Guard families with special needs. By following specific procedures and guidelines, efforts will be made to ensure sponsors with family members who have special needs are assigned to duty stations where access to, and availability of, medical and community services can be validated. (reference (k))

A Family Resource Specialist (FRS) in a HSWL Regional Practice (RP) is the primary point of contact for Active Duty members in the field for all questions regarding the Special Needs Program.

Family Advocacy Program (FAP) discusses the CG policy for the prevention, identification, reporting, investigation, and treatment of intimate partner and child maltreatment.

Your local HSWL staff can provide services to educate parents and prevent child maltreatment. HSWL RP staffs are designed to improve couples communication, parental bonding, and parenting skills. (reference (l))

Adoption Resources The Coast Guard provides a variety of services for adoptive parents. HSWL has information about adoption programs, financial reimbursement, and other support services on their website. <http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Health-Safety-and-Work-Life-CG-11/Office-of-Work-Life-CG-111/Adoption-Reimbursement/>

Legal Assistance

Coast Guard legal assistance lawyers may be able to help you with a variety of legal issues. Depending upon the availability of your local legal assistance lawyers you are eligible to receive legal assistance for a many family related topics, including adoptions, wills and estate planning, power of attorney, marriage, annulment, legal separation, divorce, financial nonsupport, child custody and visitation, and paternity cases. A Personal Readiness Plan (PRP) is offered on the Coast Guard Legal Assistance website to provide you and your family a framework to organize and store your personal information and paperwork. A PRP is a great way to have all of your personal, legal, and financial information in one place in case of an emergency, deployment or unexpected event. Contact your local legal assistance office to determine what services are available near you.

http://www.uscg.mil/legal/la/Legal_Assistance_Resources.asp

Ombudsman

The Coast Guard Ombudsman Program is a command program intended to improve communication between the command and the Coast Guard family members. Coast Guard Ombudsmen are communication links, provide information and referral resources, and act as advocates for family members. Many Ombudsmen provide important services to new parents including supplying references for doctors or daycare providers or even providing meals for the first few days home from the hospital. Use the following website to find out more information about the Ombudsman program or identify your unit's Ombudsman.

<http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Health-Safety-and-Work-Life-CG-11/Office-of-Work-Life-CG-111/Ombudsman-Program/Ombudsman-Program-Overview/>

Civil Rights

Discrimination in civil rights matters refers to unfavorable or inequitable treatment, or harassment of a person based on a protected category. Pregnancy and parental status are protected categories and any discrimination of a CG member due to pregnancy or parental status should be referred to your Civil Rights Service Provider.

<http://www.uscg.mil/civilrights/>

Women's Infants and Children (WIC) WIC is a Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children which provides Federal grants to States for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. Breast feeding mothers may be provided additional resources, including breast pumps. To find out more about WIC and if you qualify visit:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/women-infants-and-children-wic>

Coast Guard References that may help you:

- (a) Pregnancy in the Coast Guard, COMDTINST 1000.9
- (b) Military Separations, COMDTINST M1000.4 (series)
- (c) Military Assignments and Authorized Absences, COMDTINST M100.8 (series)
- (d) Safety and Environmental Health Manual, COMDTINST M5100.47 (series)
- (e) Coast Guard Aviation Medicine Manual, COMDTINST M6410.3 (series)
- (f) Reserve Policy Manual, COMDTINST M1001.28 (series)
- (g) Uniform Regulations, COMDTINST M1020.6H
- (h) Coast Guard Weight and Body Fat Standards Program Manual, COMDTINST M1020.8 (series)
- (i) Child Development Services Manual, COMDTINST M1754.15
- (j) Employee Assistance Program, COMDTINST 1740.7B
- (k) Special Needs Program, COMDTINST 1754.7B
- (l) Family Advocacy Program (FAP), COMDTINST 1752.1
- (m) Change to Maternity Leave Policy, ALCOAST 036/16
- (n) Postpartum Weight & Honor Guard Height Policy Changes, ALCOAST 301/16
- (o) Promulgation of Change 4 to Coast Guard Weight and Body Fat Standards Program, COMDTINST M1020.8H, ACN 066/17

*Resources and websites verified as of June 2017.

What is PARENT? This product was created and sponsored by a CG Island Alameda volunteer organization committed to Providing Assistance & Resources for Expectant, Newborn & Toddler families or PARENT. The purpose of PARENT is to educate and support men and women on pregnancy and child rearing in the Coast Guard, enabling them to achieve success in both their family life and military careers. Members gather monthly as an informal way to discuss issues and create camaraderie amongst parents. Seminars are held several times a year and focus on specific parenting and pregnancy topics. Guest speakers are invited to offer their expertise on a variety of subjects during the seminars. Many volunteer activities benefiting Coast Guard families at no cost are also coordinated, including second hand baby clothing and gear donation drives.