

Toolkit for Success: FAMILY LEAVE

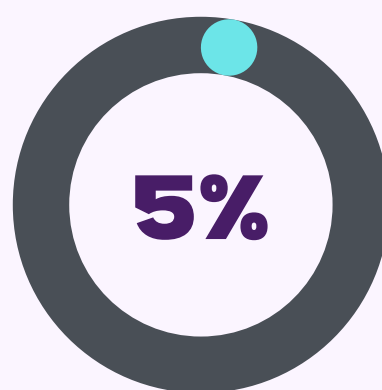


Less than 20%

The amount of veterinary practices that have paid parental leave

Less than 5%

The amount of veterinary practices that have childcare/daycare benefits



Impact on career

Female veterinarians are more likely to perceive **becoming a parent will have a negative impact on their career** than their male counterparts.



Even among veterinarians who have not had children, **women are more likely to expect this negative result.**



Most veterinary mothers experience some form of perceived discrimination in the workplace.



Self-reported miscarriage rates and post-partum depression are likely higher in the veterinary profession than the general public in the United States.



Many veterinary schools and training programs do not have transparent parental leave policies and provide little support for veterinary parents



SO, WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

The Women's Veterinary Leadership Development Initiative (WVLDI) has spent dedicated time and effort talking to women, practice owners, and leaders in the field of parental leave to come up with a list of "best practices" for you and your clinic. Our goal is to provide these easily accessible resources for you to think about, talk about, and implement, so that we can all play a part in improving our profession.

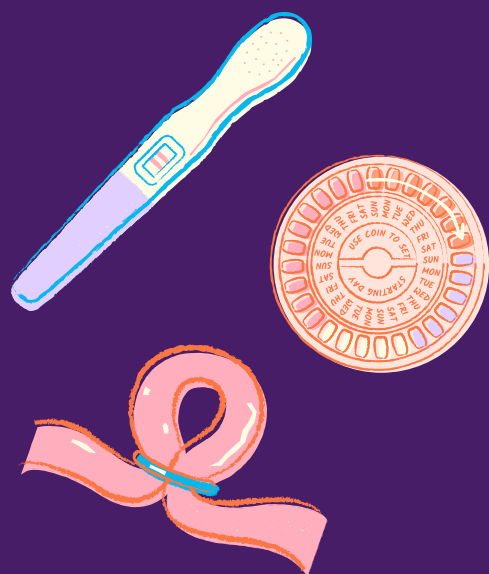
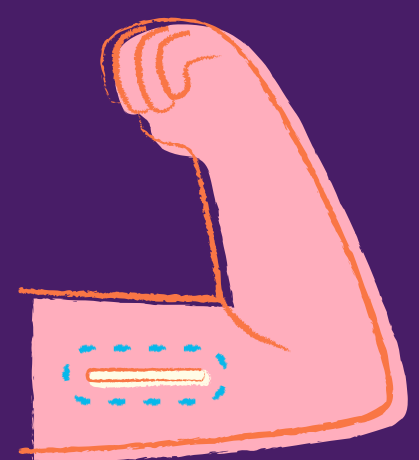
For Individuals:

1

Decide based on your needs.

Make personal decisions that make sense for your own life.

Your professional life is often not easy to forecast, and you can always change course to find something that fits your changing personal needs.



2

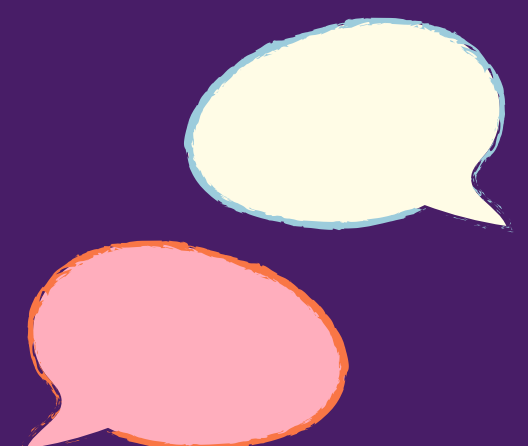
Stay equipped with knowledge.

It is illegal for companies (with 15 or more employees) to discriminate based on pregnancy status. Employers are not allowed to ask questions about your current pregnancy status or future plans. If they ask, redirect the conversation to an appropriate professional topic.

3

Talk to others.

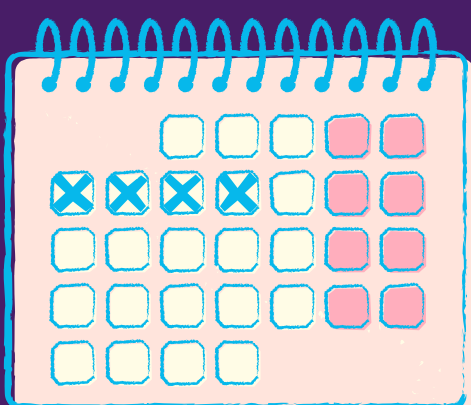
When interviewing for a job, ***ask to speak with others currently in the job.*** Ask them what it is like to work for the employer as a pregnant person or parent. If you receive an offer, ***ask for benefits information in writing*** so you know what they provide for parents.



4

Ask for what you want.

Once employed and family planning, discuss with your employer the details of parental leave and return to work. ***Ask for what you want and for flexibility if your needs or wants change.***



For Individuals:

CONTINUED

5

Safety first.

Keep yourself safe at work if you are pregnant. This means you may have to disclose early in your pregnancy to a few trusted people to help prevent exposures. (Links to additional safety information below).



6

Stay equipped with knowledge.

Ask for clean, private space and time to pump if you plan to breastfeed. Be sure to negotiate time in your daily schedule that works for you.

7

Build your support village.

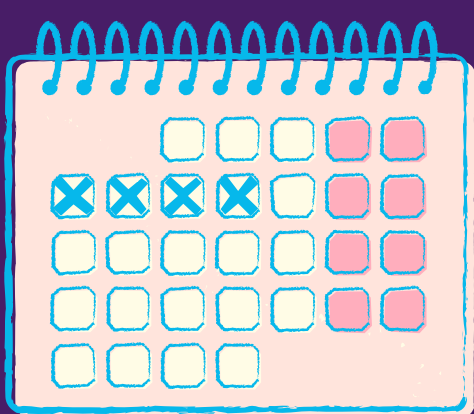
Cultivate your village of support – being a working parent is challenging and knowing others navigating similar challenges and sharing solutions and support is invaluable.



8

Your voice matters.

Advocate through organized veterinary medicine for changes in insurance policies, and for the AVMA to support legislative changes for universal parental leave and support for childcare.



Questions?

Email us at info@wvldi.org for more information or learn how to get involved.



WOMEN'S VETERINARY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

SO, WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

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For organizations:

1

Make sure you adhere to non-discrimination laws.



2

Provide a safe environment.

Provide a safe and supportive environment that gives equitable benefits to all parents including fathers, parents through adoption, and other non-traditional families.

3

Retain employees.

Recognize the value of long-term employees who feel supported in their life choices and work to be flexible to retain them.



4

Safety first.

Provide safety information that is easily accessible to all for pregnant and nursing women.



For Organizations:

CONTINUED

5

Accommodate pumping employees.

Provide *clean, private space and time* for pumping for employees.



6

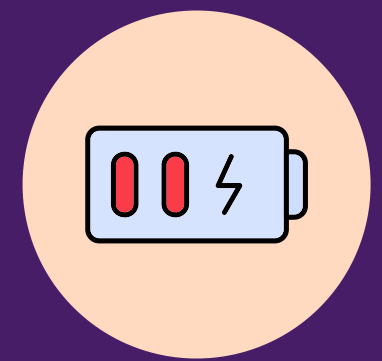
Be generous with leave.

If possible, *provide leave policies that are more generous than required FMLA leave*. Policies should not have negative accrual for leave or time away from work.

7

Offer part-time re-entry.

If possible, allow for part-time re-entry from leave for a short, specified amount of time. *Transition back to work is challenging and employees may need extra support.*



8

Foster support for new parents.

Connect new parents with current parents to share ideas and support as new parents make the transition.



9

Flexibility goes a long way.

Be as flexible as possible with expectations for employees and apply these equitably across employers, *whether they are parents or not.*

Examples include:

- Access to electronic medical records remotely and policies that allow employers to finish records within 24 hours at home if they wish.
- Paid time for call backs from home with flexibility if it can be within specific boundaries that work for the practice.



WOMEN'S VETERINARY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Resources

Click to open the linked resources.

Keeping Safe While Pregnant



Review of hazards to female reproductive health in veterinary medicine



National Institutes for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)



Mother to Baby

Free resource for pregnant and breast-feeding mothers to contact about any possible exposure concerns

Breastfeeding



Kelly Mom

Other resources



Moms with a DVM Facebook Group



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References:

1. AVMA 2021 Economic report of the veterinary profession.
2. Colopy SA, Buhr KA, Bruckner K, Morello SL. The intersection of personal and professional lives for male and female diplomates of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons in 2015. JAVMA 2019.
3. Morello SL, Colopy SA, Bruckner K, Buhr KA. Demographics, measures of professional achievement, and gender difference for diplomates of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons in 2015. JAVMA 2019.
4. Wayne AS, Mueller MK, Rosenbaum M. Perceptions of maternal discrimination and pregnancy/postpartum experiences among veterinary mothers. Frontiers 2020.
5. Rosenbaum MH, Wayne AS, Molter BL, Mueller MK. Perceptions of support and policies regarding pregnancy, parenting, and family planning during veterinary training at United States veterinary medical training institutions. JAVMA 2018.
6. Rosenbaum MH, Wayne AS, Molter BL, Mueller MK. Perceptions of support and policies regarding pregnancy, parenting, and family planning during veterinary training at United States veterinary medical training institutions. JAVMA 2018.



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