

Paternity leave

A choice for commitment



10 days to be there



Did you know paternity leave has been extended from 3 to 10 days since 1 July 2002?

Nowadays fathers want to spend more time with their child, and rightly so! They want to be involved from the moment of birth.

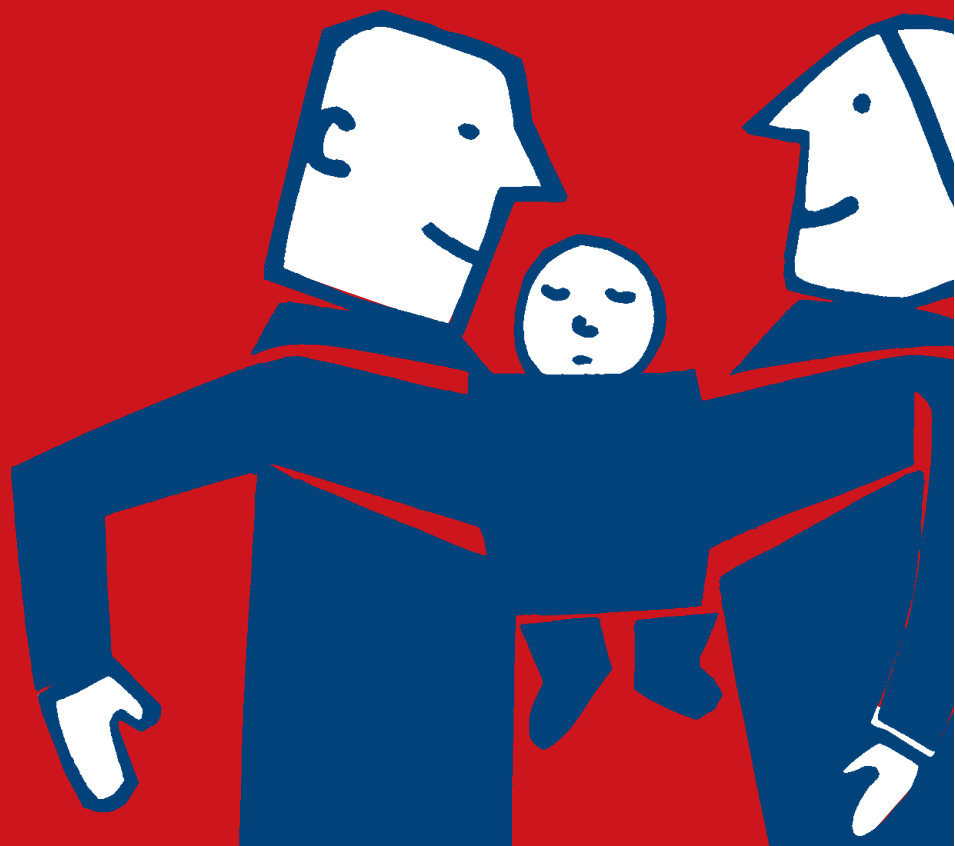
The very first days of a child's life are an exceptional life experience, a magical moment when a new relationship begins and the couple and the family find a new balance in life.

Time spent with a newborn child is not only a happy and enriching experience, it also brings about a great feeling of bonding and commitment.

The new paternity leave allows you seven more days to enjoy those very first moments to the fullest.



**Being there from
the very first days**



Since July of 2002, fathers are entitled to 10 days of paternity leave in the course of the month following the child's birth. This new right aimed at balancing work and the quality of living is an answer to a fundamental need : more and more fathers want to be involved from the very first days by taking paternity leave.

Living at the baby's rhythm

Feeling its little heart beating, comforting its first tears, giving it its first baths... It's sharing the mother's emotions surrounding the arrival of the newly born child, but also sharing her tiredness. It's playing an active part in the irreplaceable early moments. More and more fathers want to experience this to the fullest.

« For me, it was important to take the time and to be available from the start, from the moment of arrival from the maternity hospital. There are so many things to do... I wouldn't have let anyone else do it for me, even if it's not exactly a relaxing time ! »

Pierre, father of Hugo, 9 months.



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A baby changes your life

Stocking the fridge, going to the chemist's, preparing the bottles, operating one or two washing machines, a quick vacuuming before family and friends come to visit between baths, naps and bottles... Don't forget completing and sending in all those forms: municipality administration, health service, insurance... driving big brother to soccer training, decorating the baby's room, getting the birth announcement cards printed, taking time for a cuddle and sit back for a while...

« Arranging your time is a real challenge with a newborn child! It's a lot easier with two... »

Dimitri, father of three, including 3-month-old Julie.

Being there from the very first days

The birth of a child is an important change in the life of the father as well as the mother's. Being present also means handling this turnabout together, gradually adapting to new demands, and being able to enjoy the calm after the storm... The days and weeks following the birth are the perfect time for establishing a quality relationship with the baby, to get organized and to start the adventure.

« Becoming a dad means discovering a new daily role, being responsible 24 hours a day ! Taking the time to welcome my daughter was like bringing her into the world myself, my way... »

Jérôme, father of Clara, 6 months.

Another parent, different and yet equal !

Walks, bottles or tickling: from the very beginning the father creates a special bond with his child. Different from the mother's. It has been determined babies communicate differently with their parents. Discovering a different type of relationship is important for its development, the balance in the couple and in the family.

« Today's fathers dare to engage themselves in the development of their child. »

Marcel Rufo, child psychiatrist.



More time, less stress

More time, less stress. Paternity leave allows a good start in a serene climate, a plus for all family members, making it easier to adapt to the new rhythm and to go back to work in a more relaxed manner.

« Family harmony is good for the work situation. Paternity leave is aimed at a better balance and a fairer repartition of family obligations. »

Patrick, manager of an SME and father of two.

Active father ?



Sir,

Are you up for a simple game ? Just try to estimate and add up the time (in hours per week) you and your partner will spend on your child during the first years of its life.

Pass this test along to your partner and then compare your results.

TIME FOR THE CHILD	HOURS/WEEK	TIME FOR THE CHILD	HOURS/WEEK
1 pampering and playing	<input type="text"/>	8 shopping	<input type="text"/>
2 taking walks	<input type="text"/>	9 clearing up the baby's room	<input type="text"/>
3 changing and dressing	<input type="text"/>	10 doing the dishes	<input type="text"/>
4 bathing	<input type="text"/>	11 taking the child to the day-care centre, the pediatrician...	<input type="text"/>
5 putting the child to bed	<input type="text"/>	12 nursing the child when it is ill	<input type="text"/>
6 feeding	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
7 meal preparation	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK		<input type="text"/>	

A small calculation...

Madam,

In all honesty, without letting yourself be influenced by your partner's answers, please estimate the time you and your partner will spend on your child during the first years of its life.

Compare your results and then check the following page for the average time a family spends on these activities and how they are organized!

TIME FOR THE CHILD	HOURS/WEEK	TIME FOR THE CHILD	HOURS/WEEK
1 pampering and playing	<input type="text"/>	8 shopping	<input type="text"/>
2 taking walks	<input type="text"/>	9 clearing up the baby's room	<input type="text"/>
3 changing and dressing	<input type="text"/>	10 doing the dishes	<input type="text"/>
4 bathing	<input type="text"/>	11 taking the child to the day-care centre, the pediatrician...	<input type="text"/>
5 putting the child to bed	<input type="text"/>	12 nursing the child when it is ill	<input type="text"/>
6 feeding	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
7 meal preparation	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK		<input type="text"/>	

Your summary

Take a minute to look at the average times! Where do you fit in?

This table is a great starting point for discussing the daily organization of your family.

TIME SPENT ON THE CHILD BY THE COUPLE ALONE	AVERAGE TIME	FATHER	MOTHER
1 pampering and playing	3,5		
2 taking walks	3,5		
3 changing and dressing	7		
4 bathing	3,5		
5 putting the child to bed	3,5		
6 feeding	10,5		
7 meal preparation	3,5		
8 shopping	1		
9 clearing up the baby's room	1		
10 doing the dishes	2		
11 taking the child to the day-care centre, the pediatrician...	4		
12 nursing the child when it is ill	2		
TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK	45		

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As you see, the arrival of a child into a family corresponds to the equivalent of a fulltime job. When combining this with professional activities a minimum of organization and repartition of the (paid and unpaid) work is necessary to live in harmony as a couple and as a family.

Today fathers have the right to live at the baby's rhythm from the moment of its birth and to reorganize their family life according to it. This is made possible by different types of leave that can be taken.



Stick this page on the door of your fridge or put it in your child's health booklet, so you can look at it often !

Take your time !



You would like to take the time to be with your baby and its mother? Belgium offers different types of leave you can take as a father. Your employer may not oppose them or fire you for taking them.

Paternity leave

10 days of leave, to be taken all at once or spread over a period of 30 days following your child's birth. On top of the 3 days paid by your employer, your health service will pay another 7.

In order to receive this supplementary benefit, you only need to send a written application to your health service and include the baby's birth certificate. They will then send you a form that must be filled in by you and your employer to be returned at the end of the paternity leave.

These 10 days are on a par with working days and are taken into account for the calculation of your holiday allowance and your pension. So, contrary to the situation in certain neighbouring countries, you will keep a large part of your pay and your social rights.

Adoption leave is a similar leave for adoptive fathers, starting from the registration of the child into the family.

Paternity leave is a new right for all employees in the private sector and for the majority of those working in the public sector. Please ask your staff manager, trade union and/or health service for information about the terms and conditions in your sector.

Pay attention, paternity leave and parental leave are quickly evolving rights. Stay informed of the latest developments.

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Other forms of leave

Parental leave : 3 months of career interruption for the father and 3 months for the mother, to be taken up together or separately and according to 3 possibilities.

- 3 months solid in the child's first 4 years
- 6 months part-time
- one day per week during a period of 15 months to keep in line with one's work as well as one's family.

Converted maternity leave : the maternity leave that could not be taken by the mother because of a long hospitalization or decease, can be taken up completely or partially by the father, the situation being due to circumstances beyond one's control.

Where to turn to ?

For further information about

The terms and conditions of paternity leave and paternal leave

first consult your staff manager or trade union, or contact :

- ▶ Service Public Fédéral Emploi,
Travail et Concertation sociale
Administration des relations individuelles du travail
Rue Ernest Blerot 1, 1070 Brussels
Tel. : 02 233 41 11
Fax : 02 233 48 21
E-mail : rit@meta.fgov.be
Website : www.meta.fgov.be/pa/paa/framesetfrcg00.htm

- ▶ The Institute for the Equality of women and men
Rue Ernest Blerot 1, 1070 Brussels
Tel. : 02 233 41 95 - Françoise Goffinet
Fax : 02 233 40 32
E-mail : egalite@meta.fgov.be
Website : www.iefh.fgov.be

The paternity leave and paternal leave benefits

first of all consult your health service or contact :

With regard to paternity leave :

- ▶ I.N.A.M.I.
Service des Indemnités
Avenue de Tervuren 211, 1150 Brussels
Tel. : 02 739 76 69 - 02 739 76 55
Fax : 02 739 72 91
Website : <http://riziv.fgov.be/insurer/fr/allaitement/news020814.htm>

With regard to paternal leave:

- ▶ O.N.E.M.
Boulevard de l'Empereur 7, 1000 Brussels
Tel. : 02 515 41 11
Fax : 02 514 11 06
Website : www.onem.fgov.be





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A manual for fathers... and mothers

An initiative of the Institute for the equality of women and men, supported by the community strategy regarding equality between women and men

Your opinion interests us

Please send us your comments, testimonies, possible questions or impressions about this booklet and the themes you would like to see treated or handled more profoundly: counsels, education, health, parental rights and duties, family support, useful addresses...

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