

# Hair Stylists and Reproductive Health

## Risks and How to Avoid Them



If you work as a hair stylist and are pregnant or may become pregnant in the future, you should be aware of the possible risks present in your workplace and the best ways to protect yourself and your future children.

### What are the main risks?





- **Chemicals**—**phthalates, formaldehyde, and glycol ethers** are ingredients commonly found in permanent curling or straightening products and dyes.
- **Standing and lifting**—standing for more than 75% of the day and lifting heavy loads.
- **Stress**—working long hours and trying to please clients can be stressful—having support helps!

### What may happen?

While most hair stylists have healthy pregnancies and children, some studies suggest they are at higher risk than other workers in the following ways:

- Hair stylists' babies have about **double the risk of certain birth defects**.
- Hair stylists are about 10% more likely to have a **hard time getting pregnant**.
- Hair stylists more commonly experience **low-birthweight babies, preterm birth, and miscarriage** than other mothers.

### What should I do to stay safe?

-  Wear gloves, a mask, and an apron when handling dyes and straighteners—especially if you are pregnant.
-  Ask your manager to make sure the ventilation system is maintained. Opening windows and doors is also helpful for indoor air quality.
-  Always read the product labels so you know if you are handling risky chemicals.
-  Do tasks, like cutting and washing hair and checking people out, sitting when you can.

### Resources

Learn [how to read chemical ingredient lists](#).

Methods for coping with stress: [At work](#) and [home](#).

[Wisconsin Occupational Health Program](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [reproductive health information](#).

