



# MATERNITY and PARENTAL LEAVE Planning Guide



# Maternity and Parental Leave Guide (Salaried)

Your family is growing—congratulations! General Mills is proud to offer an array of benefits to working parents and their families, including paid bonding leave, phase-back-to-work options, flexible work arrangements, onsite infant care (WHQ), back-up childcare (Minneapolis area) and much more. We look forward to supporting you throughout the leave process.

## In this guide, you will find:

- ✓ A step-by-step guide to planning your leave and actions you'll need to take after your new child arrives.
- ✓ FAQs about the leave process, helpful resources for preparing for your new child, and more.
- ✓ A checklist of key contacts and to-do items that you can print and take home with you.

## Top 3 Things to Know About Maternity and Parental Leave

- 1 Leaves can combine paid and unpaid time for a total of up to 26 weeks.
- 2 Leaves impact your pay and benefits, including benefits coverage, vacation accrual, bonus and merit pay, and more.
- 3 A successful leave involves you, your manager and the company. Proactive planning is critical in making your leave as smooth as possible.

*Note: This document is intended for families planning a leave on or after January 1, 2019.*



# Step-by-Step Guide to Planning Your Leave

## How Maternity or Parental Leave Works

Here's a look at how short-term disability, paid, and unpaid parental bonding leave work together to create your maternity or parental leave.

### Birth Mothers | Up to 26 weeks total

#### Short-Term Disability

6-8 weeks 100% paid



#### Paid Parental Bonding Leave

12 weeks 100% paid



#### Unpaid Parental Bonding Leave

With manager/HR approval

### Fathers, Adoptive Parents, Partners | Up to 26 weeks total

#### Paid Parental Bonding Leave

12 weeks 100% paid



#### Unpaid Parental Bonding Leave

With manager/HR approval

**Short-term disability** for birth moms begins the day your baby is born unless pre-delivery complications/restrictions prevent you from working prior to birth. Depending on the type of birth, it will continue for the next six to eight weeks at 100% pay (eight weeks for caesarian birth). Moms who are placed on bedrest or lifting restrictions during pregnancy should contact the General Mills Leave and Disability Service Center for guidance.

All parents are eligible for 12 weeks of **paid parental bonding leave**. This time can be taken any time in the 12 months following the birth or placement of your child; however, it must be used consecutively. You are eligible for 12 weeks of bonding leave in a rolling one-year period, counted from the start date of the last leave.

In addition, with manager and HR Business Partner approval, you may be able to take **unpaid parental bonding leave** for a total of up to 26 weeks total with employment protection. It will be important to work closely with your manager throughout the leave planning process so that every reasonable accommodation can be made to meet your request for unpaid time off.

## FAQ

### Can I use vacation for leave?

Yes. After you have recovered and your disability benefit ends, you can use your accrued vacation days immediately or just prior to your established return-to-work date. You can only have one period of unpaid time off within the duration of your leave of absence. You need to use the vacation in the same calendar year in which it was accrued. Vacation shouldn't be saved up from the year anticipating you can use the prior year's vacation as part of your maternity plan when your disability period spans the new calendar year.

Note: When placed on leave, vacation accrual stops. Vacation is still accrued, however, when using vacation days as part of your leave or on company holiday. If you overuse vacation in one year, the overused amount will be deducted from the following year.

### Can I use sick time for leave?

No. Paid sick time cannot be used as part of a maternity leave. Sick time is intended for an employee's own intermittent sickness or a family member's sickness. Sick time is available upon return from leave to be used to care for yourself or your child in case of illness.

# Before Leave Begins

## Attend a Parental Leave Planning Session (Optional)

Hosted monthly by one of our Benefits team members, this virtual session provides an overview of our maternity and parental leave programs and allows you to ask questions about the process. For dates and times, search for G&Me article “Planning Your Maternity Leave or Parental Leave – U.S. Salaried”.

## Share Your News With Your Manager

Deciding when—and how—to share your news with your manager and team is a personal choice. Your manager will work with you to create your leave plan and support you through the process of taking a leave and transitioning back to work.

## Contact the General Mills Leave and Disability Service Center

When you know your expected due date, call HR Direct at **1-888-200-5555**, option 2 for the Leave and Disability Service Center, or online at <https://www.mysedgwick.com/generalmills> or [GO/MySedgwick](#). This will begin the process of opening a claim with Sedgwick, the company that we partner with to administer our leave and disability programs. When the claim has been opened, you and your manager will receive email notification.

## Review Detailed Information on G&Me

From time off policies, to phase-back-to-work options and back-up childcare, there is a wealth of information on G&Me related to maternity and parental leaves. It is important that you review this information carefully to ensure you understand the requirements around leaves—and the many programs, benefits and resources available to you. Simply search by keyword on G&Me:

Short Term Disability Policy  
Parental Bonding Leave Policy  
Vacation and Holiday Policy  
Flexible Work Arrangement Policy  
My Benefits

Phase Back to Work  
Infant Care Center (WHQ)  
Sick Child Care (Minneapolis)  
Bright Horizons Care Advantage (Minneapolis)



# Before Leave Begins...continued

## Complete the Maternity and Parental Leave Form

The leave form documents how long you will be out of the office and your desired phase-back-to-work schedule (if applicable). The form can be found by searching G&Me: “Maternity and Parental Leave Planning Form - U.S.”. Complete the form and request your manager’s review of your paid leave plan (and approval of any unpaid leave) by email. If you would also like a leave and disability specialist to review your plan before submitting for your manager’s review/approval, you can email the team at [disability.fmla@genmills.com](mailto:disability.fmla@genmills.com).

Once your manager has reviewed (and approved if needed), send the finalized form to the General Mills Leave & Disability Service Center by hitting the submit button on the third tab.

## Adjust Your Priorities

Your performance rating and bonus are based on the time that you are working during the fiscal year of your leave. Work with your manager to revise your Priorities to reflect what is expected and realistic to complete given the leave period. Note: If you are on leave during performance appraisal timing, your bonus will be paid at the normal time and your merit increase will go into effect when you return to work.

## Discuss Communication Preferences

You should also discuss with your manager how you wish to handle annual processes, team changes or key company announcements which may occur during the leave period. Employees are not expected stay in communication or conduct work activities during their leave, but some employees may prefer to. Note: Your building and systems access remains unchanged while on leave.

### TIP

Be sure to document your meetings, projects, key contacts, systems access and any other information that will be important for those who are covering your work while you are out.

Here are some templates and tools that may be helpful:

- [Outgoing Employee Transition Guide](#)
- [Knowledge Transfer Guide](#)
- [Active Directory \(Check Systems Access\)](#)

### Assign Delegates in Workday

If you regularly manage tasks in Workday, you should set up delegates who can handle them in your absence. Search G&Me for “Managing Workday Approvals while Out of the Office” for details.

If delegates are not assigned prior to leave, HR Direct can assist.

# Before Leave Begins...continued

## Take Care of Personal Action Items

Beyond work, it is a good idea to determine what personal action items you may wish to take to ensure your legal, financial and childcare needs are in order.

Some common actions for expectant parents include:

- **Researching and interviewing childcare providers**, including back-up options such as Bright Horizons (Minneapolis) or Under the Weather (Minneapolis). Search G&Me for more information about these benefits.
- **Meeting with a financial planner**. It is common to consider opening a 529 college savings plan, secure or increase life insurance policies, and review your financial picture in light of your growing family.
- **Working with a lawyer to create a will** that outlines who will care for your child and your estate if anything happens to you and your spouse or partner.

Not sure where to start? General Mills partners with many top providers to make it easy and affordable for you to get financial guidance, legal services, life insurance, medical and mental health advice, and more. Search for G&Me article “My Benefits website - US (benefits eligible employees)” for a full listing of resources and contact information.

## Understand How Your Pay and Benefits Will Be Impacted

Maternity and parental leaves—even when 100% paid—do impact your pay and benefits. This includes benefits coverage, vacation accrual, bonus and merit pay, and more.

**Search G&Me for “Compensation and Benefits Impact During Leave Summary” to see how your pay and benefits are impacted while on a leave.**

## FAQ

### What if I need to go on bed rest?

If you have pregnancy-related complications and are unable to work prior to delivery, contact HR Direct at **1-888-200-5555**, option 2.

### If I don't deliver by my due date, can I start my leave of absence early?

If you wish to miss work prior to delivery without a medical reason, you may use any vacation time that you may have available. Be sure to discuss your parental leave plan, including any vacation you plan to take, with your manager and/or HR.

### Can I work beyond my due date and start my leave of absence when my baby is born?

Many expectant mothers are able to work up to their due date and potentially beyond. If you work beyond your due date, your leave of absence will be adjusted to begin on your first day of absence so please remember to update your leave plan accordingly so your pay is processed correctly. If there is any question about your ability to do your job safely, you may be asked to consult with a doctor to verify your ability to continue working.

# When Your New Child Arrives

The arrival of a new child is an exciting, but hectic, experience. Even in this busy time, there are some very important steps you'll need to take to ensure your pay and benefits are calculated correctly and your child is covered by your medical insurance (if applicable). Here's what you'll need to do:

## Notify the General Mills Leave and Disability Service Center

After your child arrives, call **1-877-491-5295** or email [GMILeaveDisability@sedgwickcms.com](mailto:GMILeaveDisability@sedgwickcms.com) to confirm that you are beginning leave. We recommend doing this in the first week following your child's arrival. If you have opened a claim prior to birth/placement but don't report the start of your leave to us, you will be contacted by phone or text (if enrolled) to confirm the date your leave has begun.

## Confirm Your Leave Plan

Shortly after you confirm leave has begun, you will receive a letter confirming the length of your leave and expected return-to-work date. Review this letter and confirm it accurately reflects your plan. Contact your manager and the General Mills Leave and Disability Service Center with any changes.

## Provide Proof of Birth or Placement

You will be required to provide proof of your child's birth or placement. Acceptable forms of documentation include a birth certificate (official or memento), application for birth certificate, adoption certificate, or anything else that lists your name, the child's name, and the child's date of birth. Documentation can be emailed to [GMILeaveDisability@sedgwickcms.com](mailto:GMILeaveDisability@sedgwickcms.com) or uploaded to <https://www.mysedgwick.com/generalmills> or [GO/MySedgwick](https://www.mysedgwick.com/go/my-sedgwick).

## Add Your Child to Health Insurance

If you wish you add your child to a General Mills-sponsored medical plan, you must enroll your child in coverage within 31 days of his/her birth (or placement) on [go/MyBenefits](https://www.mysedgwick.com/go/my-benefits). If you fail to enroll in coverage within 31 days, you must wait until the next open enrollment period (October) for coverage to begin the following January.

## FAQ

### What do I do if I need to extend my leave?

If leave needs to be extended for a medical reason for yourself or your newborn, contact HR Direct, option 2. You'll need to provide updated medical documentation before the extension and your leave benefits are approved. If it is for a non-medical reason, contact your manager to discuss a change to your leave plan. Upon manager approval, submit the updated leave plan to the General Mills Leave and Disability Service Center so that records can be updated to reflect the correct leave dates and benefits.

# When Your New Child Arrives...continued

## Review and Update Other Benefits Elections

My Benefits offers a helpful checklist of benefits-related steps for new parents to consider taking. Simply visit [go/MyBenefits>Life Events>Birth or Adoption](https://mybenefits.com/LifeEvents/BirthorAdoption).

You may wish to:

- **Make changes to your beneficiary designation** for your 401(k), life insurance or deferred compensation.
- **Begin contribution to a Daycare Spending Account**, and/or increase Healthcare Spending Account contributions.
- **Review your optional life insurance coverage** for yourself, your spouse, and your dependent children.
- **Update your W-4** to ensure the correct amount of tax is deducted from your wages.

If you have questions about Benefits enrollments or elections, call HR Direct at **1-888-200-5555**.

## Take Care of Your Physical and Emotional Well-being

A new child is one of life's most exciting - and overwhelming - milestones. As a General Mills employee, you have access to a wealth of mental health resources. If you need help, it's just a phone call away.

### For emotional and mental health concerns:

Visit Spring Health for a wide variety of resources to help you and your family. Free counseling is also available (up to 6 visits).

Phone: 240-558-5796 - website [generalmills.springhealth.com](https://generalmills.springhealth.com)      Access Code: generalmills

The first six therapy sessions per year are covered at 100%. Additional sessions are covered at the in-network coverage level (subject to deductible, 80% paid by the plan).

Spring Health is 100% confidential and your information is never shared.



# Transitioning Back to Work

As you prepare to return to work, here are some steps you may need to take:

## Change Your Return to Work Date (if applicable)

Notify the General Mills Leave and Disability Service Center and your manager if your return to work date has changed. Requests for additional unpaid time off must have manager approval. Medically-necessary leave extensions must provide documentation and be approved by the General Mills Leave & Disability Service Center.

## Discuss Phase-Back Schedules

If you are phasing back to work, be sure to talk with you manager about your schedule and communicate your schedule to the General Mills Leave and Disability Service Center.

## Restart Contributions to Flexible Spending Accounts

Contributions to your flexible spending accounts will be stopped during any unpaid time off. Be sure to contact HR Direct within 31 days of your return to work to restart contributions to your accounts.

## Review Mother's Room Information

If you plan to pump breastmilk at the Main Office, Bassett Creek, or JFB, review mother's room information on G&Me by searching for "Nursing Mother's Room Guidelines". If located elsewhere, contact local HR.



# Helpful Resources

## General Mills Leave and Disability Service Center

*Submit your claim, confirm birth or placement, questions about the details of your leave plan*

1-877-491-5295 (phone)

866-315-0607 (fax)

[GMILeaveDisability@sedgwickcms.com](mailto:GMILeaveDisability@sedgwickcms.com)

<https://www.mysedgwick.com/generalmills> or [GO/MySedgwick](#)

## General Mills Benefits Service Center

*Benefit enrollment questions, information on paycheck deductions for benefits, enrolling your child in health care coverage*

1-888-200-5555, option 1

## HR Direct

*Questions about the overall leave process, vacation, work flex and other time off programs*

1-888-200-5555

## Your Medical Plan Administrator (ex. BCBS)

*Medical claim questions, understanding what is covered under your plan*

See the back of your insurance card for contact information

## Financial Finesse

*Financial planning resources and guidance*

1-888-899-4237 or

[www.financialfinesse.com](http://www.financialfinesse.com) (access code: GENMILLS)

## MetLife Legal

*Estate planning resources*

1-800-821-6400 or

[www.legalplans.com](http://www.legalplans.com) (access code: 9260154)

## Spring Health

*Mental Health and Employee Assistance Program*

240-558-5796

[generalmills.springhealth.com](http://generalmills.springhealth.com) (access code: generalmills)

## Maternity/Parental Leave Checklist for Employees

*Below are actions you'll need to take before and during your leave. Be sure to review this preceding pages of this guide for more detail on each of these items.*

- Share your news with your manager
- Attend a parental leave planning session (optional)
- Contact the General Mills Leave and Disability Service Center (GMLDSC) with your child's expected arrival date
- Submit your leave form to [GMILeaveDisability@sedgwickcms.com](mailto:GMILeaveDisability@sedgwickcms.com)
- Adjust your priorities
- Discuss communication preferences
- Review the benefits impact chart on G&Me
- Transition your workload
- Report the start of your leave to GMLDSC
- Provide proof of birth or placement to GMLDSC
- Add your child to your health insurance (if desired) through [My Benefits](#)
- Review and update other benefit elections
- Confirm your return-to-work date and phase back schedule with your manager and the GMLDSC
- Check in with Solve-It for computer updates
- Review mother's room information (if needed)