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**Parental Time Off for UC Physicians clinical providers**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **How much time can I take off when I give birth or adopt a baby?**

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) mandates that employers give employees up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave following the birth or adoption of a child.  This leave is available to both moms and dads. The FMLA law does NOT require an employer to pay its employees during their FMLA leave.  It only requires the employer to give an employee the time off and give the employee his/her job back after the leave.

1. **How do I get paid during my time off? What will I be paid during parental leave?**

As part of its employee benefit package, the University of Cincinnati has chosen to offer two banks of paid time off to employees:  (1) VACATION time and (2) SICK time.  Employees accrue these benefits in banks to be used when needed and approved.

* 1. Employees may use SICK time when they are off work for their own illness/injury/disability or to care for an ill/injured/disabled family member.
	2. Employees may use VACATION time.

In addition, UC Physicians (UCP) offers two (2) benefits that supplement the UC sick and vacation banks: Short-term disability insurance (STD) and Paid Parental Time Off (PPTO). STD is an insurance plan that pays 70% of weekly earnings (tax free) after the longer of (a) a 2 week elimination period or (b) when all UC SICK time is exhausted. PPTO is two weeks of pay for clinical providers only.

1. **What is the difference between leave for childbirth and childrearing? Can I use the paid parental time off (PPTO) for either?**

Leave for childbirth includes a medical leave for the mother to recover from labor and delivery. A childrearing leave can be used by mothers and fathers and is time off to bond and care for a newborn or newly adopted child. SICK time can only be used during childbirth (medical) leave, but PPTO can be used during either leave.

1. **Can I use SICK time for all of my 12 weeks off after childbirth?**

For a typical parental leave, there are 2 phases to the leave: The medical portion and the childrearing portion. The medical portion applies to mothers that give birth, and is intended to allow time off to heal from childbirth and any other medical conditions. This portion of the leave is typically approved for 6 weeks for an uncomplicated vaginal delivery and 8 weeks for an uncomplicated cesarean section. The childrearing portion is intended for fathers, parents that adopt, and additional time off for mothers that give birth to care for the child beyond the point of medical necessity.

UC and UCP policies allow employees to use sick time during the medical portion of the leave, but not the childrearing portion.

1. **What if there is a complication with my pregnancy or birth—can I use additional SICK time beyond the 6 to 8 weeks usually granted?**

You may use your SICK time during periods of medical necessity, which may include time off before the birth or additional time off after the birth, if medically necessary due to complications. Your physician must provide appropriate documentation of medical necessity. UC will continue to pay your base salary as long as SICK hours are available. UCP will pay SICK time to a maximum 13 consecutive weeks (subject to availability of SICK time hours in the UC timekeeping system). After 13 weeks, UCP Long-term Disability (LTD) insurance provides income replacement, pending claim approval.

1. **Can fathers use SICK time for parental time off?**

If the father is taking time off for childrearing purposes, he may not use SICK time, but may use PPTO or VACATION time. If there are medical complications with the baby, fathers can use SICK time per UC policy and FMLA regulations. Fathers may also use SICK time if there is a documented medical necessity to care for his spouse during or after pregnancy.
2. **Can I use SICK time after adoption?**

If there are medical complications with the adopted child, employees can use SICK time per UC policy and FMLA regulations. If the time off is for childrearing purposes, employees may use PPTO or VACATION time.
3. **What if I have don’t have enough SICK time or no SICK time accrued-- can I take any paid leave after childbirth?**

UCP has provided two benefit plans designed to supplement your UC sick bank: Short-term disability insurance and Paid Parental Time Off. The short-term disability insurance is a tax-free benefit that pays 70% of your weekly salary, up to a maximum of $4,000/week, after you use all of your sick time. Like sick time, STD covers the medical portion of your leave. Please refer to UC Physicians Sick Pay and Short-term Disability Policy.

The short-term disability benefit begins after 2 weeks of disability. Employees with no sick time at all may use the PPTO benefit to stay in paid status during the first 2 weeks.

If an employee has no accrued sick time, they would be eligible to use short-term disability and PPTO. Once those benefits are exhausted, employees have the option to use accrued vacation time or go unpaid.

1. **Do I have to enroll separately in the short-term disability (STD) plan? Are all faculty eligible?**

The UCP STD benefit is available to UCP clinical providers that work 15 or more hours each week on a regular schedule. Enrollment is automatic and managed by the COM HR team.
2. **Can I use short-term disability for any illness-related absence if I have no SICK time available?**

Yes, short-term disability can be used for any illness/injury/disability that lasts longer than 2 weeks. All UC sick time must be exhausted before the STD benefit will begin payment.
3. **Can I use short-term disability for parental leave and “save” my SICK days?**

No, the UCP STD benefit is designed to supplement the UC sick bank and will only pay a benefit once an employee’s sick time is exhausted for the remainder of the medical leave.
4. **How does STD pay and PPTO pay differ from SICK and VACATION pay?**

The VACATION, SICK and PPTO banks are paid through UC and UCP payroll, according to the regular monthly payroll schedule. The UC sick and vacation banks replace 100% of your base pay until the banks are exhausted. For clinical providers who receive variable/incentive pay, UCP will calculate the sick pay rate based on a formula. Please refer to UC Physicians Sick Pay and Short-term Disability Policy. The PPTO pay is calculated the same as UCP sick pay.

1. **How is the STD benefit calculated?**

For most clinical departments, the STD benefit is calculated as 70% of your total pay, including UC base, UCP base and variable, and VA pay, up to a maximum of $4,000/week. This equates to covering 70% of the first $300,000 in annual salary. In addition, the STD benefit is not taxable.

For Internal Medicine and Primary Care Network providers, the STD benefit is calculated as 70% of your UCP base and variable pay (does not include UC pay).

1. **Does PPTO have to be used immediately after birth/adoption?**

PPTO must be used within the first 12 weeks following birth/adoption, but does not have to be used immediately after birth/adoption. For parents taking more than 2 weeks off following birth/adoption, work with your COM HR Consultant to determine the most advantageous time to use your PPTO hours, in conjunction with other banks. For parents taking only 2 weeks off, approval for the time off must be obtained from department leadership, using the PPTO request form.

1. **Can I use PPTO intermittently, or do I have to use it continuously?**

PPTO must be used continuously within the first 12 weeks following a birth or adoption.
2. **May I use PPTO for more than one child during my UC career?**

Yes.
3. **Can dads use PPTO?**

Yes, up to 80 continuous hours (based on FTE) within the first 12 weeks following birth, if they serve as primary caregiver.
4. **Can I use PPTO after adoption?**

Yes.
5. **After a birth or adoption can both parents, who are both UCP clinical providers, use PPTO?**

If both parents are UCP clinical providers, only one parent may use the PPTO benefit.

1. **Do I accrue sick and vacation hours time while on leave?**

Yes, sick and vacation balances continue to accrue as long as the employee remains in a paid status in the UC and UCP payroll systems. If the employee goes into unpaid status in the UC and UCP payroll systems for a full calendar month, no sick or vacation time is accrued for that month.
2. **How do my benefit premiums get paid while I am out on leave?**

As long as an employee remains in a paid status, benefit premiums will be deducted from his/her regular monthly paycheck. If an employee goes into an unpaid status for a full calendar month, the UC Benefits department will mail an invoice for the employee portion of benefit premiums to the home address and the employee is responsible for mailing a check to UC.
3. **Will my email or Epic access be deactivated while on leave?**

No, email and Epic access will remain active, however some university systems may be unavailable to employees in a leave of absence status.
4. **If I take 12 weeks of FMLA after childbirth, can I take additional sick or vacation time later in the year if needed?**

Yes, if additional time off is available in your bank and your request is approved per UC and your department’s time off request policy.
5. **Are all the specialties or COM departments the same with respect to parental time off?**

Yes, PPTO is available to any UCP or dually compensated clinical provider.
6. **With whom should I speak in planning my time off after birth or adoption?**

Please contact your COM HR Consultant to plan your leave of absence.
7. **Where can I find more information about the benefits available to me?**

The UCP policies on PPTO and Clinical Sick Time are stored on the COM intranet (<https://med.uc.edu/com-intranet/>). Choose UC Physicians, UC Physicians Polices and Forms, Human Resources, UCP HR Policies.

The UC policies regarding time off, medical leave, and other benefits can be found on the UC Human Resources website (<https://www.uc.edu/hr.html>). Time Off policies, including use of sick time, vacation time, FMLA, and other medical leaves, can be found under Labor Relations, Policies & Procedures, Area 21 – Time Off From Work.