

## Taking paternity leave

You can take either 1 or 2 weeks of paternity leave to care for your baby or adopted child. This is the same even if you have more than one child, for example twins.

You can start paternity leave on one of these dates:

- the date your baby is born
- from an agreed date within 8 weeks after your baby is born or was expected to be born
- the day your adoption placement starts, or from an agreed date within 8 weeks after
- the date your adopted child arrives in the UK or an agreed date after, for an overseas adoption
- the day your surrogate baby is born or the day after

You must:

- take the leave all in one go
- finish it within 8 weeks (56 days) of your baby being born or your adoption placement starting

It's a good idea to make preparations with your employer in case either:

- your baby is born earlier or later than expected
- your adoption placement starts earlier or later than expected

## Changing when you start paternity leave

If you want to change when you start paternity leave, you must give your employer 28 days' notice. This does not have to be in writing unless your employer requests it.

You cannot start paternity leave before the birth or adoption placement.

All your leave must be taken within 8 weeks of:

- the birth
- the start of the adoption placement

## Sharing leave with your partner

If you both have responsibility for a child, you might be able to use Shared Parental Leave (SPL).

This means your partner could end their maternity or adoption leave early and use what's left of their entitlement more flexibly between you.

[Find out more about Shared Parental Leave.](#)

## If you want to take more than 2 weeks' leave

If you're not taking Shared Parental Leave and want more paternity leave to care for your new baby or child, you could talk with your employer about taking:

- holiday
- parental leave, which is usually unpaid

### **Holiday**

You could agree with your employer to take some holiday before or after your paternity leave.

### **Parental leave**

Once you have a child, you have the right to parental leave. This means you can take up to 4 weeks of parental leave before or after your paternity leave. Parental leave is usually unpaid – check your contract.

[Find out more about parental leave.](#)

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