



## Chronic conditions and the workplace

Having a chronic condition may have an impact on various aspects of your life, including your work. So, it's important to create a working environment that minimises the impact on your health and wellbeing and allows you to access support you may need.

Your care team can help you work out what you might need from your employer and how to access this support. It's also important to understand your rights and responsibilities.

### Talking about your chronic condition at work

You don't have to tell your workplace if you have a chronic condition. There are some circumstances where providing health information to your employer may be the best course of action:

- You may want to let your employer know if your condition affects your ability to do your job, or if it could potentially cause health and safety issues for other people you work with (for example, a medication you are taking makes you drowsy and it would be unsafe for you to operate machinery).
- If you need to take time off work. There may be paid or unpaid leave, or flexible working options depending on your situation, and you may be required to provide evidence to your employer that you're unwell, like a medical certificate. Your doctor doesn't have to provide any details of your illness or your chronic condition on the medical certificate, it only needs to say that you are unwell and unable to work.



## Any other information you choose to share is up to you

You don't have to provide any details to your employer or the people you work with, like the name of your condition, or any symptoms it causes.

If you do choose to provide your employer with information about your condition, they're not allowed to share that information with other people without your consent.

There can be both advantages and disadvantages to telling your employer or the people you work with about your condition. Some of these are listed below, but you may be able to think of others. It's up to you to think about your own situation and needs, and decide what you feel comfortable sharing.

Apprehensions you may have	Why talking about your condition at work may be helpful
You are not comfortable talking about personal matters at work	Your employer can make accommodations to make it easier for you to work
You have enough support outside the work environment	You have a friendly group of colleagues who you feel will offer support
Worry that negative perception of your ability could affect your career prospects	Changes can be made in the workplace that will have a positive effect on your health
Worry about people treating you differently	You might find hiding your condition at work to be a cause of stress





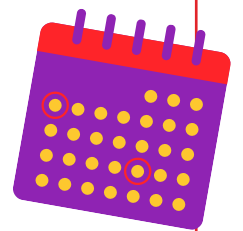
## What sort of support can you ask for at work?

If your condition is making it difficult for you to work, you can ask for accommodations, like a flexible work arrangement. This might include working from home, working part-time, flexible hours, or job sharing.

For some chronic conditions, your employer is required to make reasonable adjustments, so you can continue working. These may include changes to your workspace, access to car parks, lifts, and ramps, more breaks, headsets or screen-reading software, building modifications or flexible work hours.

If there's something you think might make working easier for you, it's worth considering asking your employer if it would be possible. Discussing what to say to your employer with your doctor, care team, or trusted people in your support network might make you feel more confident having this conversation.

## Taking leave from work



Living with a chronic condition can mean you have to take time away from work when you become unwell, or for medical appointments or procedures. You may have access to different types of leave:

- Paid sick leave.
- If you run out of paid sick leave, you may be able to ask your employer if you can take unpaid sick leave.
- You may also be able to use your annual leave if you need time off.

If you need to ask for leave from work, talking with your doctor and care team can be very helpful. They can help you work out important information your employer may want to know, like how much time away from work you might need to take, whether you will be able to return to your normal duties when you come back to work, and provide you with any documentation you might need, like a medical certificate.