

## **Overview**

EI maternity benefits are offered to biological mothers, including surrogate mothers, who cannot work because they are pregnant or have recently given birth.

EI parental benefits are offered to parents who are caring for a newborn or newly adopted child or children.

What are EI maternity benefits?

EI maternity benefits are offered to biological mothers, including surrogate mothers, who cannot work because they are pregnant or have recently given birth. A maximum of 15 weeks of EI maternity benefits is available. The 15 weeks can start as early as eight weeks before the expected date of birth, and can end as late as 17 weeks after the actual date of birth.

### **What are EI parental benefits?**

EI parental benefits are offered to parents who are caring for a newborn or newly adopted child. A maximum of 35 weeks of parental benefits is available to biological, adoptive, or legally recognized parents. The two parents can share these 35 weeks of benefits. A person recognized as the child's legal parent on the provincial or territorial birth certificate may be eligible to receive parental benefits.

Note: The number of weeks of EI maternity or parental benefits you are entitled to receive does not change, even if you have a multiple birth (twins, triplets, etc.) or if you adopt more than one child at the same time.

### **Are you eligible for EI maternity or parental benefits?**

You may be eligible to receive EI maternity or parental benefits if:

- you are employed in insurable employment;
- you meet the specific criteria for receiving EI maternity or parental benefits;
- your normal weekly earnings are reduced by more than 40%; and
- you have accumulated at least 600 hours of insurable employment during the qualifying period or, if you are a self-employed fisher, you have earned enough money during the qualifying period.
- You have paid EI premiums

If you are employed in insurable employment, your employer will deduct the applicable EI premiums from your wages or salary. There is no minimum or maximum age for paying EI premiums.

You need to pay EI premiums on all your earnings up to a maximum amount. In 2017, for every \$100 you earn, your employer will deduct \$1.63, until your annual earnings reach the maximum yearly insurable amount of \$51,300. The maximum amount of premiums to be paid in 2017 is therefore \$836.19.

Note: These rates and amounts are reviewed each year. For more information on the most recent rates and amounts, visit the EI premium rates and maximums.

You meet the specific criteria for receiving EI maternity or parental benefits

EI maternity benefits are payable only to the biological mother who is unable to work because she is pregnant or has recently given birth. To receive maternity benefits, you need to prove your pregnancy by signing a statement declaring the expected due date or the actual date of birth.

EI parental benefits are payable only to the biological, adoptive, or legally recognized parents while they are caring for their newborn or newly adopted child. To receive parental benefits, you must sign a statement declaring the newborn's date of birth or, when there is an adoption, the child's date of placement for the purposes of the adoption and the name and address of the adoption authority. In cases where the child is not legally adoptable, parental benefits could be payable from the date you attest that you consider the placement a permanent one and that it is your intent to adopt the child placed with you at the earliest opportunity. In these circumstances, the Commission may, at any time, request proof certifying that the child for whom you are claiming parental benefits has been placed with you by a recognized authority and that the placement was not merely a temporary one.

Your normal weekly earnings are reduced by more than 40%

When your normal weekly earnings are reduced by more than 40% because of pregnancy or your need to care for newborn or newly adopted children, you may be eligible for EI maternity or parental benefits. You have accumulated at least 600 hours of insurable employment during the qualifying period

Hours of insurable employment are the hours you work, for either one or more employers under written or verbal contracts of service, for which you receive wages.

**The qualifying period is the shorter of:**

- the 52-week period immediately before the start date of your EI period; or
- the period since the start of a previous EI benefit period, if that benefit period started during the last 52 weeks.

To be eligible for EI maternity benefits, you must have accumulated at least 600 hours of insurable employment in your qualifying period. If you are a self-employed fisher, you must have earned \$3,760 from fishing during the 31-week qualifying period immediately before the start of your benefit period.

To be eligible for EI parental benefits, each parent who applies for benefits must have accumulated at least 600 hours of insurable employment in his or her qualifying period. If you are a self-employed fisher, you must have earned \$3,760 from fishing during the 31-week qualifying period immediately before the start of your benefit period.