



Patient & Family Guide

2023

Things to Think About When Going Back to Work



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How will I know when I am ready to go back to work?

- Going back to work may not mean that you are fully recovered or no longer have symptoms.
- Before you go back to work, you will have to do a lot of thinking and planning. It may take more than one try to successfully go back to work.

Things to think about:

- Are you able to do all of your daily activities?
 - › We recommend that you do not go back to work until you are able to do all of your daily activities (like taking care of yourself and household tasks).
- Many employers need medical clearance from your doctor before developing a back-to-work plan.
 - › Have you talked to your employer (manager, supervisor, or human resources) about how to start going back to work?

- › Have you talked with your health care team (primary health care provider [family doctor or nurse practitioner], occupational therapist, physiotherapist) about whether you are ready to go back to work?
- You may not be able to go back to work.
 - › You may no longer be able to meet your job requirements . You may have to look into accommodations, modifications, or a new job. This may include changes to your physical workspace, work rules or policies so that you can fully do your job. There are many community agencies that can help you find options (see “What if I am not going back to my job and want to look into other options?” on back page).

What should I think about when considering going back to work?

- Do you understand your employer’s benefits (disability) and policies (accessibility, reasonable accommodation)?
 - › **Accessibility:** making sure every person at a workplace (abled or disabled) has easy access to everything they need to be able to do their job

- › **Reasonable accommodation:** changing the workspace and/or work demands (tasks) so people with disabilities who are qualified to do the job can do the job
- › Have you applied for or are you getting illness and/or disability benefits (like short-term illness, long-term illness, Employment Insurance sickness benefits, Canada Pension Plan disability benefits)?
- Have you talked with someone from your workplace and someone from your illness or disability benefits provider (like a disability case manager or a rehabilitation consultant) since you have been off work?
 - › We recommend you stay in close contact with your employer and your insurance provider during your rehabilitation. It may help to schedule regular meetings to talk about how you are doing. This will help to make a timeline for you to go back to work, and any accommodations or modifications you may need.

What can I do to get ready to go back to work?

- Think about your reasons for going back to work. Making a list can help you set goals.
- Talk to someone you trust about how you feel about going back to work.
- Track how you are doing and how you handle daily activities (how long you can do certain activities before you have problems or fatigue). This can be done in a notebook or spreadsheet.
- Try to follow a schedule similar to your work schedule.
 - › For example, if you are usually at work by 8 a.m., try getting up at 6 a.m. Do your usual morning routine to see how long it takes. Try to decide when you may need breaks during the day.
- Over time, slowly start to add activities that are similar to what you do at work.
 - › For example, if most of your work is done at a computer, practice typing or reading documents at the computer.

What if I am not going back to my job and want to look into other options?

- Nova Scotia Works can direct you to a local employment service centre for career counselling, job development, employment support, and more. They can help you learn about new job opportunities that match your abilities, education, experience, and interests. They can also help you with resume support, networking with possible employers, and getting ready for interviews. To get started, visit:
 - › <https://novascotiaworks.ca/nsdc/>
 - › Click on ‘Sign In’, create an account, and then fill out the intake form.

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

