



PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

TRAVELLING IN PREGNANCY

Travel is an essential part of life even for pregnant women and especially for those working. Hence it is important to be armed with some important advice regarding travel in general and commuting within the town or city.

It is imperative to get a full check done prior to travel and carry the notes from your doctor to your destination. Certain vaccinations may be required prior to travel to certain parts of the world and the safety in pregnancy needs to be confirmed. Travel vaccinations: all live vaccinations are avoided in pregnancy. However some live vaccines may be considered during pregnancy if the risk of infections outweighs the risk live vaccination. Non-live or inactivated vaccines are safe for use in pregnancy. Travel insurance plays a big role in reducing stress during unexpected medical aid or hospitalisation either en route or at the destination.

The first 12 weeks may not be the best time to travel due to nausea, vomiting, fatigue and excessive sleepiness. Also the risk of miscarriage is higher in the first trimester irrespective of travelling. The ideal time to choose for travel would be from about 4-7 months of pregnancy.

Travel by air

Air travel is not harmful for either the baby or the mother during pregnancy.

1. However, some airlines do ask for a letter from the doctor stating the due date and fitness to travel after 28 weeks and may not allow travel in the last few weeks of pregnancy due to the risk of labour.
2. Going through usual security scanning and checks are not harmful in pregnancy. Use seat belts during the travel.
3. Long flights (> 4 hours) may carry a small risk of developing clots in the limbs known as deep vein thrombosis (DVT). The risk of a DVT increases with the length of the flight and if you have additional risk factors such as a previous DVT or you are overweight. Hence, it is important to take advice from your obstetrician about ways to prevent this. Keep well hydrated, regular strolls along the aisle and do leg exercises while being seated every 30 minutes will help avoid this complication. Some women may also need TED stockings (thromboembolic deterrent stockings). In some cases where a high risk of thrombosis is probable, heparin injection may be prescribed during long flights.



Travel by road

Travel by two-wheelers: during the first few months of pregnancy, trouble with nausea, dizziness etc may make 2- wheeler driving unsafe. Later in pregnancy, balance and handling the vehicle may be challenging. In general, 4-wheelers would be safer in pregnancy.

For safe travel and commute on 4-wheelers:

1. Seat belt- Highly recommended. The belt is to be worn such that the shoulder portion goes over the collarbone and runs across the chest between the breasts. The lower belt should run under the bump and across the upper thighs as low as possible. Ask the cabin crew if you need a seatbelt extension.
2. Air bags are considered safe for pregnant woman.
3. If there is a collision or a big jolt during driving, it is important to get checked by a doctor to take necessary advice.
4. Avoid driving vehicles in late pregnancy as it may be physically challenging to keep good control of the steering wheel.
5. If travelling as a passenger especially on a long journey, these are some useful tips:
 - a. Frequent breaks and stretching limbs.
 - b. Do some simple leg and feet exercises as it will help ease cramps and improve circulation.
 - c. Keeping well hydrated.
 - d. Follow DVT prevention tips as described above in the air travel section.
 - e. Avoid eating in unhygienic outlets and maintain hand hygiene to avoid food and water borne infections. Carry plenty of healthy snacks and water for light refreshment along the way.

All in all, travelling and commuting can be made safe and enjoyable in pregnancy without the fear of complications unless your doctor has categorically recommended avoiding travel. If your job entitles frequent travel you must discuss with your Doctor.

