



Travel during Pregnancy

Most women can travel safely until close to their due dates if they follow a few simple guidelines. Of course, it is always best to discuss your plans with your doctor. This handout is designed to provide you with additional information and tips for safe and pleasant travel.

When to Travel

The most comfortable time for most pregnant women to travel is during the second trimester (14 to 28 weeks of pregnancy). By this time, your body had adjusted to pregnancy and you probably have more energy. Morning sickness is usually no longer a problem and the rate of complications is at its lowest. Toward the end of your pregnancy, it may be more difficult for you to move around and sit comfortably for long periods.

Getting There

Here are some hints that apply no matter what type of travel you choose:

- Walk around frequently--every hour and a half or so. This will decrease swelling and help make you more comfortable.
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothing that does not bind.
- Take some crackers, juice, or other light snacks with you to help prevent nausea.
- Do not take any prescriptions or over the counter drugs before checking with the doctor. This includes motion sickness pills and laxatives.
- Take a copy of your medical record with you if you will be traveling far from home. You may want to schedule a prenatal visit before you leave.
- If you plan to travel very late in your pregnancy, check with your doctor.
- Going into labor away from home can pose problems for which you may not be prepared. Keep your travel plans as flexible as possible. Problems can develop prior to your departure that may require cancellation of your trip.

By Air

Flying is generally safe during pregnancy. Airlines in the United States usually allow pregnant women to fly up to 36 weeks of pregnancy. Late in pregnancy, you may want to limit travel--ask your doctor. Metal detectors used for airport security checks are not harmful to the fetus. Here are some tips for a comfortable flight:

- Try to get an aisle seat so that you can walk around and get to the bathroom easily.
- The forward part of the plane usually provides a more stable ride. A seat just behind the wall dividing first class and coach, where there is extra leg room, is a good choice.
- Try to walk every 30-60 minutes up and down the aisle.
- Cabin temperature can change even on a short flight. Wear a few layers of light clothing that will allow you to bundle up or remove a layer or two.
- Eat lightly to avoid being airsick.
- Because the air in the cabin is dry, drink plenty of fluids. Special meals are available on some flights if you order in advance.