

Travel During Pregnancy

Timing

The safest and most comfortable time to travel is usually mid-pregnancy, between 18 and 24 weeks. For safe access to medical care, after 24 weeks (while in your third trimester) you should stay within 300 miles of home.

Airline travel

Each airline has its own policy, but most have some restrictions about air travel during the third trimester. Be sure to ask about restrictions when you make reservations, and keep in mind how far along your pregnancy will be on your return trip. During airline travel, you can take preventive measures to make your flight more comfortable. This includes avoiding gas-producing food and drinks before the flight, drinking plenty of fluids before and during the flight, and periodically moving your legs and ankles. To protect yourself during possible air turbulence, always wear your seatbelt while seated. Airline seatbelts are best fastened under the belly at your pelvis.

Car travel

Always wear your seat belt when traveling by car. It is the best protection for you and your baby. However, it is important to place the seat belt below your belly. Never wear the seat belt on or above your belly. Leave air bag switches on. Air bags work with seat belts to protect passengers in the event of a crash. However, you should move your seat back as far as possible (your breastbone should be at least 10 inches from the steering wheel or dashboard), and continue moving your seat back as needed as your pregnancy advances.

(National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)

International travel

Before international travel, call the International Travelers Hotline at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP). This service has safety information and current vaccination facts for many countries. The number is (404) 332-4559. You can also check the CDCP web site (www.cdc.gov) for international health information, or the American Red Cross (www.redcross.org). The CDCP also has a chapter in their travel guidebook specifically for pregnant travelers which can be found on their web site (<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/ch9/pregnancy-traveling.aspx>).

Insurance coverage

Most insurance companies will restrict coverage of delivery and emergency expenses if you are away from home. Coverage of routine prenatal and postpartum care may be restricted as well. Make sure to check with your insurer. If you buy travel insurance, check for restrictions related to pregnancy.

Talk with your provider about your travel plans. This is important in your third trimester, as your pregnancy becomes more advanced.

*Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Preparedness, Detection, and Control of Infectious Diseases, Division of Global Migration and Quarantine. www.cdc.gov
US Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. www.safecar.gov*