What you really need to know about travelling when pregnant and with your baby.

Helpful hints from SMA Nutrition

TAKING GOOD CARE OF YOU AND YOUR BABY
Help from people with experience.

Whether it’s a quick trip to the shops, taking your baby to the child minder or going away on holiday, travelling with your baby can be an exhausting experience, even before the birth!

This booklet has been prepared by people with experience of pregnancy and motherhood, so it is full of realistic and practical advice.

It outlines how, with a little preparation, potential travelling problems can be avoided to allow a smoother journey for both you and your baby.

In an effort to constantly improve the quality of the booklets and information we offer to mums and dads, your feedback is greatly appreciated. If you have any tips you think other parents would find useful, or comments on how we could improve this booklet, you can write to us or ring the SMA Caroline. To all those who have already done so, and whose comments we’ve tried to incorporate in this booklet, we’d like to say thank you.
Q: Is there anything I need to know about travelling now I’m pregnant?

A: The following tips may be useful.

**Seatbelts.**
- You are still required, by law, to wear a seatbelt during pregnancy, unless you have a medical certificate stating otherwise.
- The seatbelt strap which crosses your lap should be put across your hips under the bump.
- The diagonal seatbelt strap should cross your chest between your breasts above the bump.
- The seatbelt straps should always lie above and below the bump, not over it.

**Airbags.**
- If you are a passenger in a car with a passenger airbag, you should put the seat back as far as possible or sit in the back seat.
- If you are driving a car with an airbag, you should put the seat back as far as you safely can, while still allowing you to control the vehicle.

**Driving and Parking.**
- As your bump grows, driving a car may become more uncomfortable and you should be aware that your reactions may be slower in the later stages of pregnancy.
- Reversing, parking and getting in and out of the car may become more difficult as you get bigger. Try to find parking spaces which are not too tight.

**Sickness.**
- The effects of pregnancy sickness can be worse when travelling, so be prepared to stop if you feel unwell.
- A supply of tissues, freshen up wipes, plastic bags and a bottle of water to rinse your mouth out may be useful companions.

**Long car journeys.**
- Try not to undertake long journeys on your own.
- Take regular breaks.
- Pull over if you start to feel unwell, dizzy or tired.
- Take a mobile phone with you to call for help in case you break down, or need to stop for any reason.

**Flying.**
Flying itself shouldn’t cause any problems but there are some things you should consider.
- Will you need immunisation for your destination? Some are not suitable whilst you are pregnant.
- Check whether the airline, your health professional and your insurance company are happy for you to fly. Most of the airlines ask for a doctor’s certificate stating that you are fit to travel and prefer not to take pregnant women beyond the 32nd week (mothers can and do travel safely after this time however). Some insurance policies do not cover travel after the early stages of pregnancy.
- It is important to carry up-to-date details of your pregnancy with you, so that should something unforeseen happen the information is at hand.
- Try to get an aisle seat so that you can stretch your legs and get up to walk about more easily.
Q: What do I need to know before taking my baby in the car?

A: There are quite a lot of safety considerations you should be aware of.

Car Seats.

Choosing the correct car seat is an important decision which you will need to make even before your baby is born because his first car journey will probably be travelling home from hospital. The following guidelines may be useful when choosing a seat.

It is recommended that you purchase a new car seat for your baby and not a second hand one, even if you know its history.

It is very important to ensure that you choose a car seat that conforms to the latest European Safety Standard ECE R44.03 Universal.

Whilst no one child seat is suitable for all ages, most are now designed to cover at least one stage of a baby's development. It is the weight of your child, not the age, that will determine what type of seat or restraint is suitable.

Note: Rearward facing child seats are not suitable for use in the front seats of cars with passenger air bags.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage/Group</th>
<th>Child's Weight</th>
<th>Approx. Age of Child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Up to 10 kg (22 lbs)</td>
<td>Birth to 9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0+</td>
<td>Up to 13 kg (29 lbs)</td>
<td>Birth to 12-15 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>9 - 18 kg (20-40 lbs)</td>
<td>From 9 months to 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>15 - 25 kg (33-55 lbs)</td>
<td>4 years to 6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>22 - 36 kg (58-79 lbs)</td>
<td>6 years to 7 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Health

Always make sure your baby is securely strapped into the seat and the seat is securely fixed in the car according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Making the journey safe.

Never travel with your baby on your lap and never leave him alone in the car. If you are travelling alone, remember to keep your car doors locked, even when you are in the vehicle. Try to avoid travelling alone late at night and always let someone know where you are going.

If parking on the side of the road, try to ensure that the side of the car where your baby is sitting is next to the kerb. This will make things easier and safer when taking your baby in and out of the car.

For extra peace of mind whilst travelling, it may be worth joining one of the national rescue operations, such as the AA or RAC.
Q: How can I stop my baby becoming restless?
A: Keep him occupied.

You’ve just settled into your car journey and your baby starts to cry or becomes restless. Does this sound familiar? Here are a few tips to keep the travel tantrums at bay.

If possible, try not to travel just before feeding times so you can avoid those inevitable hunger cries. This is especially important if you are driving alone.

If you can, start your journey around nap time so that your baby can sleep for at least part of the drive.

A few toys will keep him amused and playing nursery rhyme tapes in the car may be helpful if he becomes bored or irritable.

If your baby still causes a fuss whilst you are driving, pull over. Don’t try to console him whilst driving, however tempting it may be to reach your destination as quickly as possible.

Q: What can I do to make my baby more comfortable?
A: Take a few practical measures.

It’s important to keep babies at a comfortable temperature. However, if they feel too hot or too cold, they’re likely to become restless, so avoid too many or too few layers of clothing, or keeping the heater on full.

Remember not to pack all the nappies and changing equipment in the bottom of a suitcase - you’ll need them to hand in case of an emergency!

Travelling for a long period of time is tiring for both of you so it makes sense to stop for a break. This is the ideal opportunity to feed and change your baby and get some fresh air.

Don’t forget, if you are travelling on a motorway, most service stations offer baby changing facilities.