

THE PREGNANT TRAVELLER

If you are pregnant, visit your physician before going abroad, especially if travelling by air. An ultrasound may be advisable to rule out an ectopic pregnancy, in which the fertilized ovum is implanted outside the uterus.

Check airline rules for pregnant passengers before booking your ticket. In Canada, airlines will allow you to fly up to the 35th week of pregnancy, provided that you are healthy and have no history of premature labour. The rules in other countries might be different. You could be asked to supply a letter from your doctor verifying the stage of your pregnancy.

Make sure that your travel insurance policy provides coverage for all eventualities. Most policies do not automatically cover pregnancy-related conditions or nursery care for premature infants.

The low humidity in airline cabins can cause dehydration, so you may want to increase your water intake.

Pregnant women have an increased risk of blood clots. Request an aisle seat and try to stand up, walk or stretch your legs regularly.

Once your pregnancy has been confirmed, you will need expert advice. A Canadian organization called Motherisk will answer your questions about the safety or risk of vaccines, drugs, chemicals and disease during pregnancy (see the "For More Information" section).

It is wise to build in extra rest stops while travelling. Your body is busy nurturing a baby, and the added effort of travelling makes it work even harder.

In developing countries, pasteurized milk is often difficult to find. You can take powdered milk with you to ensure that you get enough calcium. It can be added to most foods.