Dear Alice,

I would like to ask you regarding pregnancy and flight. Yes, travel by airplane! Is it safe for a woman in pregnancy (one, three, five, or seven months) to take a flight? What about when the baby is just one, two, or three months to take a flight as well? I would appreciate if you could give me some advice. Regards.

Answer

Dear Reader,

Air travel is not generally considered risky to unborn babies, but it can be grueling for mothers-to-be. You may want to speak with your health care provider before you make travel plans to ensure there are no special circumstances in the pregnancy that would prohibit air travel. In addition, a little planning can make the flight much more comfortable. The following suggestions can help make time above the clouds as pleasant as possible for pregnant women:

- Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing and shoes. Bring a sweater and dress in layers in case the plane's air temperature is too warm or too cool.
- Spend a few minutes every hour or so walking and stretching to avoid cramps and back pain and to increase circulation.
- Airplane air is dry? take special care not to become dehydrated by drinking plenty of fluids. Moisturizing your hands and face can help refresh you as well.
- For long flying times, pack healthy snacks and juice or water so you're not dependent on soft drinks and salted peanuts.
- Request a special low-fat meal in advance of the scheduled departure date. These meals are not only healthier, but fresher as well since they're made nearer to take-off time.

Experts usually recommend the second trimester as the best time to schedule air travel. By the fourth to sixth month, most women are accustomed to the changes of pregnancy, but aren't too large to be uncomfortable or too close to their due dates. Oftentimes, health care providers advise against air travel by the seventh month. Airlines usually allow women to fly up until the last month of pregnancy, but this is not advised for women who have a history or risk of pre-term labor. Women who plan to fly close to their due dates should check the airline regulations and bring copies of their prenatal care records, including their due date, just in
Infants can do very well on plane trips. Their main trouble stems from an inability to "pop" their ears when air pressure in the plane changes with the altitude. Unlike adults who can chew gum, or hold their noses and blow to relieve pressure in their ears, infants usually rely on the classic technique of screaming loudly to relieve the pain. This works, but is upsetting for parents and annoying to everyone else on the flight. To avoid becoming the most unpopular passenger on the plane, parents can nurse or bottle-feed infants during take off and landing. Swallowing will help relieve the pressure in the baby's ears and keep everyone happy.

It's also a good idea for parents to plan on bringing extra diapers, wipes, and changes of clothes for the baby in a carry-on bag. They may want to pack some baby medications, too?check with a health care provider to see which medicines are most helpful. Safe travels!

Alice!
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