

Car Safety During Pregnancy

Why Must I Wear a Seatbelt?

Car accidents are a leading cause of injury and death among people in the United States. Many of these deaths can be avoided simply by using seatbelts. 40% (40 out of 100) of pregnant women and new mothers who die in car crashes in Michigan were not wearing seatbelts. Seatbelts must be worn by everyone, every time they are in a car, no matter how short of a distance they are traveling. Pregnant women need to wear their seatbelts in a way that will protect both themselves and their babies while traveling.

How Do I Buckle Up While Pregnant?

Your baby is well protected inside of you. By buckling your seatbelt you are protecting yourself, which is the most important thing for your baby. Wearing a seatbelt will not harm your baby if it is fastened correctly.

When wearing your seatbelt:

- Always wear both the lap and shoulder belt
- Buckle the lap belt low on your hipbones, below your belly
- Never put the lap belt above or across your belly
- Place the shoulder belt across the center of your chest (between your breasts) - never under your arm, behind your back, or across your neck
- Make sure the belt fits snugly
- If the vehicle has a tilt steering wheel, make sure the steering wheel is tilted toward your breastbone, not your belly or head
- Move your seat so it is as far back as possible. Your breastbone should be at least 10 inches from the steering wheel

- As your belly grows throughout your pregnancy, keep adjusting the seat to allow as much space as possible while still being able to reach the pedals

What Happens in an Accident?

During a car crash, there are two collisions. The first is when the car hits something, or is hit, and suddenly comes to a stop. The people in the car will keep moving after the car stops moving. If they are not buckled in, the second collision will happen when they fly forward inside the car and hit the seat in front of them or the windshield.

Will the Air Bags Harm Me or My Baby During an Accident?

If you fly forward into an opening air bag because you are unbuckled, the force of the impact can be enough to cause harm to both you and your baby.

However, if you are buckled in, the airbag will work together with your seatbelt to keep you and your baby safe. Do not turn off the airbag switch.

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