

Pregnancy and Buckling Up

Recent research determined about one in every 25 pregnant women is involved in a police reported crash. About 17% of these mothers to be weren't buckled up*.

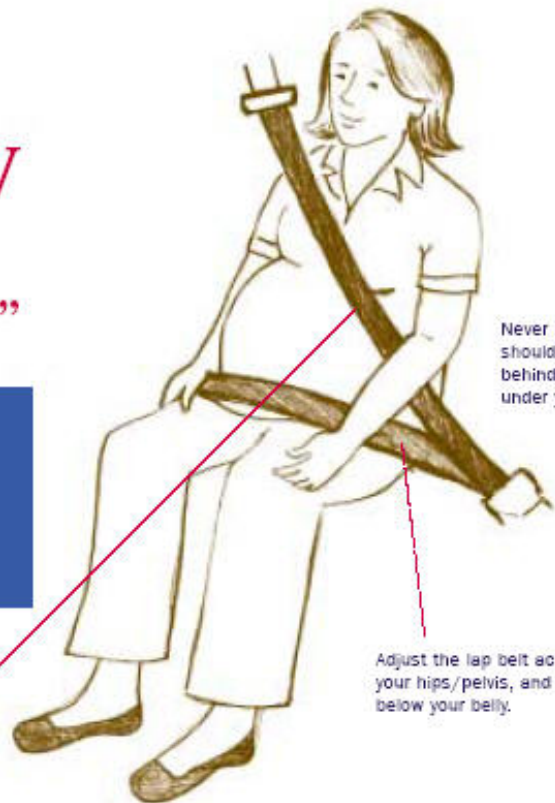
Doctors recommend you always wear your safety belt because you are your baby's first car seat. A lap and shoulder belt provides more protection than a lap belt alone.

Wear your safety belt properly. Push the lap part of the belt down low, under your belly. The shoulder belt should be across the center of the shoulder and chest. Never place a safety belt under your arm or behind your back. Adjust your seat belt snugly. If you wear a heavy coat, open it and pull it to both sides, away from your belly.

“What’s the right way to wear my seat belt?”

NEVER place the lap belt above or on your belly.

Place the shoulder belt across your chest (between your breasts) and away from your neck.



Never place the shoulder belt behind your back or under your arm.

Adjust the lap belt across your hips/pelvis, and below your belly.

Don't disconnect the airbag. Doctors recommend pregnant women wear seat belts and leave the air bag on. The two systems work together to protect both you and your unborn child.

Move your front vehicle seat as far back as possible. Your breastbone should be at least 10 inches from the steering wheel or dashboard. As your abdomen grows during pregnancy, move the seat back to keep as much distance as possible while still allowing you to reach the pedals. Make sure all other occupants and objects are properly restrained.

Get yourself checked at the emergency department after any crash even a minor one. The baby could be seriously hurt even if you do not seem injured.

To increase your safety:

- Drive or ride during daylight hours and good weather
- Arrange for shorter trips, meet people part way
- Consider public transportation (buses, trains, commuter rails)
- Ride with drivers who are alert, experienced, cautious, and good defensive drivers
- Don't ride with impaired drivers
- Plan routes you are familiar with good roadways
- Make sure the vehicle is in good safety condition (tires, wipers, mechanics, etc.)

Reduce the time you spend in the car:

- Arrange for people to visit you
- Shop in larger quantities to cut-down on shopping trips
- Shop online
- Ask someone else to make the trip
- Postpone trips until after pregnancy
- Rent a video or CD rather than go to movies
- Have parties at your house rather than going out
- Arrange for increased telecommuting to work if possible
- Arrange for home nursing visits rather than trips to the doctor
- Fly rather than take long car trips

*Center for Injury Research and Control University of Pittsburgh www.pregnantcrash.org