

## Air Travel in Pregnancy - Summary Guideline

Reference No.: UHDB/AN/06:22/A6

A woman may request a letter to confirm there are no anticipated complications for flights taken after the 28<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy and a confirmation of the expected date of delivery.

The format on page 2 may be used, completed by a midwife if the woman is midwife led care or by a doctor if the woman is under consultant led care.

Examples of relevant medical complications which may occur during pregnancy and which would contraindicate commercial air travel include:

- Severe anaemia with haemoglobin less than 7.5 g/dl
- Recent haemorrhage
- Otitis media and sinusitis
- Serious cardiac or respiratory disease
- Recent sickling crisis
- Recent gastrointestinal surgery, including laparoscopic surgery, where there have been gastrointestinal procedures carried out and where suture lines on the intestine could come under stress due to the reduction in pressure and gaseous expansion
- Unstable fracture, where significant leg swelling can occur in flight, is particularly hazardous in the first few days of a cast being placed.
- Severe pregnancy complications e.g. threatened pre-term labour, fulminating pre-eclampsia

### Other Considerations

- To consider the reason for travel, the duration and the destination
- Issues with the destination include recommended immunisation and anti-malarial medication. In general terms antimalarial agents can be used, whilst a live vaccine such as for Yellow fever should be avoided.
- How many weeks pregnant will the woman be when she travels and when she returns.
- The medical facilities at the destination in the event of an unexpected complication with pregnancy
- Travel insurance to cover pregnancy and care for the newborn baby in the event of an unexpected delivery.
- Advise the woman to take her handheld pregnancy notes with her.
- Advise the woman if she is feeling unwell on her return to see her G.P. or contact the assessment unit
- The woman should be advised to ensure that the strap is reasonably tightly fastened under her abdomen and across the top of her thighs.

## **Letter for air travel in pregnancy**

Name of woman intending to fly:

Date of birth of women intending to fly:

I can confirm that:

- The pregnancy is progressing normally
- The pregnancy appears to be uncomplicated at present
- The expected due date is:
- I do not know of any pregnancy related reason this woman can't fly

Letter provided by:

Name:

Designation:

Date:

Signature