Air Travel and pregnancy:

Introduction:
With an uncomplicated pregnancy it is generally safe to fly. Before flying you will need to discuss this with your doctor and also enquire about airline regulations since policies might differ between airlines. Most airlines will allow you onboard before 35-37 weeks gestation. Your airline will also request a letter stating the expected date of delivery and whether there are any contraindications for flying.

Concerns with air travel involve the changes in cabin pressure and decrease in humidity. There is no evidence to suggest that these changes will cause you to go into preterm labour or have a miscarriage.

What are the possible problems associated with air travel?

- Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)-sitting for long periods of time (usually > 8 hours) can cause a blood clot in your calves or pelvis and can be fatal. If you had a previous DVT or have risks factors such as obesity, you should discuss this with your doctor.

- Swelling of legs due to fluid retention and therefore it is recommended to mobilize

- Nausea and vomiting especially if you’re early pregnant

- Nasal congestion and blocked ears

Special precautions:

- Take regular walks, every 30min

- Stay well hydrated with water, and minimize your intake of coffee, fizzy drinks and alcohol
• If you are at increased risk of developing a DVT you might need to take an injection of a blood thinning agent called heparin on the day of the flight and for a few days later

• Wear elastic stockings

**Important points:**

• Discuss your travel plans with your doctor. You will be advised based on your medical history you have provided.

• Is it necessary to fly?

• Take all necessary documentation with regards to your pregnancy with you

• Obtain medical insurance and enquire about medical facilities nearby your destination

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