

# Pregnancy and Seat Belts

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**Injury Prevention Program**  
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# Protecting yourself and your baby

Your unborn baby is completely dependant on you for safety while you are in a vehicle. The best way to protect your child is protecting yourself by using a seat belt on every ride.

## How the seat belt works

In a collision, the seat belt will keep you in your seat and allow your body to slow down gradually. It also spreads the forces of a crash over the larger and stronger parts of your body, i.e. chest, hips, shoulders.

## How to use the seat belt

Pregnant women sometimes find their seat belt uncomfortable or worry that it might harm their unborn child. If worn properly, seat belts are comfortable and provide considerable protection in a crash.



If the shoulder belt cuts across your neck, try repositioning the seat or if the vehicle has an adjustable shoulder belt, lower the anchor point.

If the lap belt becomes too short to cross your thighs, call your vehicle dealer and ask about seat belt extenders.

## Air Bags

Remember that air bags are supplemental protection and they are designed to be used with lap/shoulder seat belts. If you are the driver, your abdomen should be 25 cm (10") away from the steering wheel. You may need to reposition your seat and / or steering wheel. If you are the passenger, move your seat as far away from the dash board as possible.

By the third trimester, if you can not move your abdomen 25 cm. (10") away from the steering wheel, you may have to avoid driving.

## If you have a collision

Any time you are in a collision, whether a minor fender-bender or something more serious, you should be examined as soon as possible. A medical examination is important no matter how far along you are in your pregnancy. Even if you feel fine, call your doctor, midwife or go to an emergency room.

Shoulder belt should be snug and placed between the breasts

Lap belt should be low across the hips and over the upper thighs – not over the abdomen