

Recommendations for pregnant women

Nine months, nine driving tips

- / **Correctly fastening your seatbelt reduces the risk of serious fetal injury by more than 50%**
- / **You should sit with your belly at least 25 cm away from the steering wheel to avoid direct impacts in the event of an accident**
- / **Women with a healthy pregnancy should not worry about driving as long as they follow a series of recommendations**

Martorell, 22/08/2017.—Can the seatbelt cause injury to a pregnant woman? Are there any medical objections to driving? Now that road travel is so frequent during the holiday period, some pregnant women may have concerns regarding whether or not to get behind the wheel. If the doctor does not suggest otherwise, it is perfectly safe to drive as long as some recommendations are followed:

- 1) **Always wear your seatbelt:** Wearing a seatbelt is mandatory for pregnant women in most European countries. **“The lap belt must be placed as far down as possible in order to restrain the woman at the pelvis and avoid putting pressure on the fetus. The diagonal shoulder belt must go over the abdomen, between the breasts and rest on the collarbone”**, explains Javier Luzón, who heads Vehicle Safety Development at SEAT.
- 2) **Reduce by half the risk of serious fetal injuries:** Half of all possible serious fetal injuries in the case of an accident could be prevented by correctly wearing the seatbelt, according to the latest studies. Without this safety device, a direct impact with the steering wheel **“could cause serious injuries, such as placental abruption or uterine rupture”**, warns Dr. Emmanuel de Sostoa, who is the head of Gynaecology at SEAT’s new Healthcare and Rehabilitation Centre (CARS), which is located in Martorell and is the only one of its kind in Spain.
- 3) **Keep your belly about 25 cm away from the steering wheel:** Sliding your seat back away from the steering wheel helps prevent injuries in the event of an accident if the lower part of Wheel comes into direct contact with the woman’s abdomen.
- 4) **Always activate the airbag:** Experts point out that it is advisable to activate both front seat airbags, when a pregnant woman is either driving or sitting in the front passenger seat.
- 5) **Comfortable and safe month after month:** There is a huge difference between driving during your first trimester of pregnancy and between month four to nine. For this reason



it is important to adjust the position of the seat as the months go by, adjust the seat back as vertical as possible and adopt a correct sitting position.

- 6) **Wear a complementary pelvic band:** Some women, especially if they are in late pregnancy, optionally choose to wear a pelvic band below their belly. Although it is not mandatory, it can make your trip more comfortable.
- 7) **Loose, comfortable clothing, flat shoes and relaxed driving:** As in any other normal circumstance, pregnant women are advised to wear flat, comfortable shoes when driving. It is also advisable to increase the safety distance to avoid any sudden manoeuvres and unpleasant surprises.
- 8) **Make frequent stops:** It is generally advisable to avoid making long trips. Constant hunger and the need to take frequent bathroom breaks are common among most pregnant women, so it is recommended to stop often, and take advantage to walk around and activate your blood circulation.
- 9) **When should I stop driving?:** There is no explicit prohibition in the case of a healthy pregnancy. According to Dr. Sostoa, pregnant women must exercise “**common sense**” and stop driving when they no longer feel comfortable behind the wheel. For this reason, women often stop driving during the last month of their pregnancy.

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