



# Car Safety During Pregnancy

*Please wear your seat belt when driving or riding in a car. Seat belts and air bags are your best protection against injury to yourself and your baby if you are involved in an accident.*

## **Seat belts**

In the first three months of pregnancy, the stomach muscles and pelvic bones protect the growing uterus and baby from injury. In the later months, as the uterus grows bigger, the baby has less protection from injury.

Correct placement of the seat belt around your abdomen is important. Keep the lap belt under your belly, low and across your hips. The shoulder harness should come down over your shoulder, between your breasts, and over the top and side of your belly to fasten at the side.

## **Air bags**

Car manufacturers recommend that drivers be seated with at least 12 inches between their chest and the steering wheel to avoid injury from an air bag in an accident. Air bags are designed to work with seat belts. Safety tests have shown that air bags cause more injuries and deaths if they are used alone than if the driver or passenger is also wearing a seat belt.

Pregnant women sometimes worry that their growing bellies place them too close to the steering wheel when driving. However, manufacturers state that as long as a pregnant woman is using her seat belt properly, the risk of injury from an air bag is still less than if she relies on her seat belt alone.