

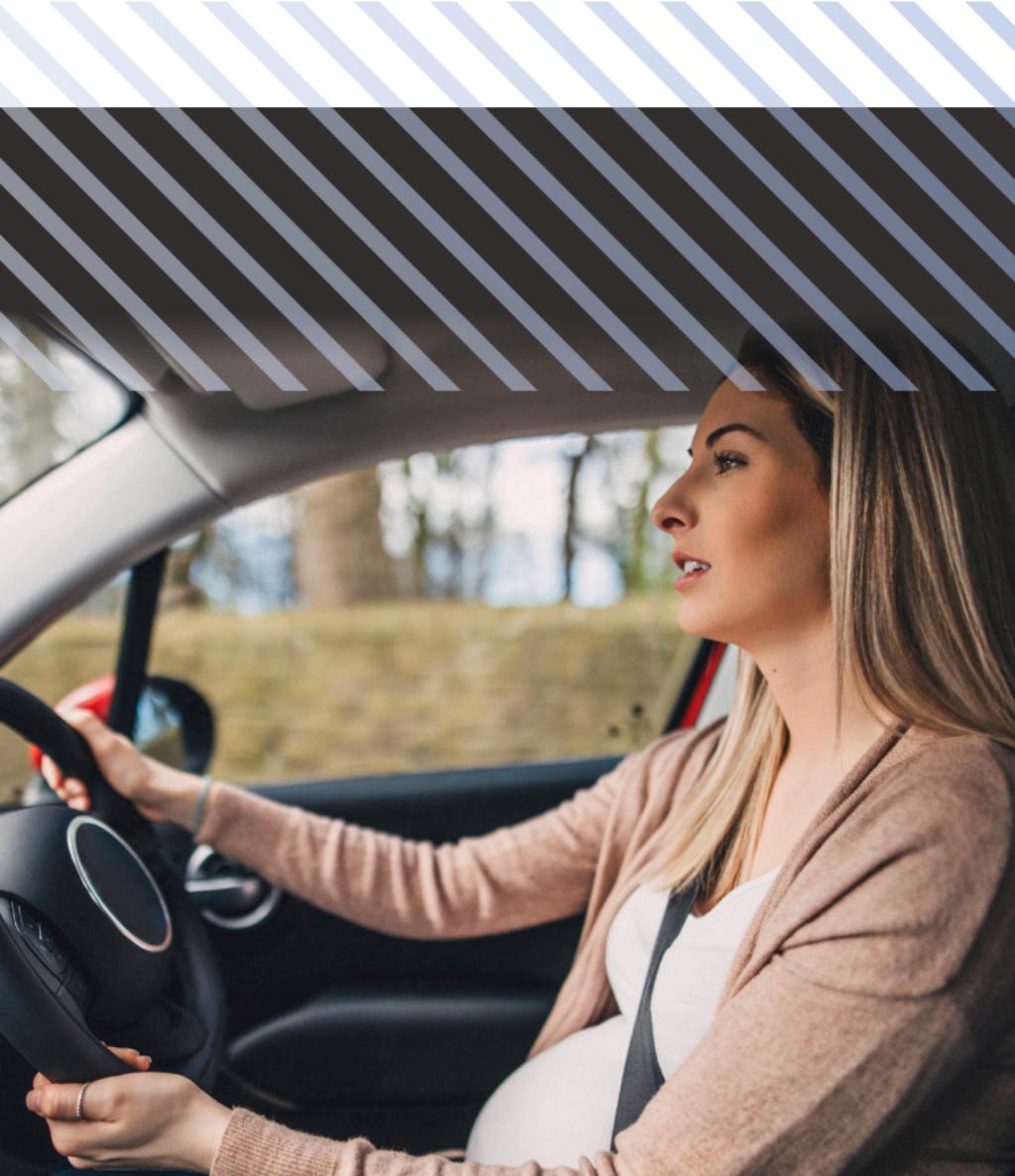


National Driver Licence Service

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta um Cheadúnais Tiomána

Pregnancy and Driving

Information and advice on safe and responsible driving
during pregnancy.



This leaflet provides information and advice on safe and responsible driving during pregnancy.

Pregnancy and driving

You can drive as normal during your pregnancy, as long as you are comfortable and can use the car safely.

Tips for safe driving in pregnancy

You can drive in late pregnancy as long as you can drive safely, and you haven't been advised to stop driving.

Pregnancy may impact on your driving ability at varying stages due to:

- nausea e.g. morning sickness (usually early stage)
- dizziness (anytime)
- tiredness (anytime)
- swollen ankles or leg cramps (mid to late stage)
- baby bump (mid to late stage)

Nausea and tiredness can make it hard for you to concentrate on your driving. Make sure you take regular breaks and only drive when you feel alert and well-rested. On long journeys take a break every 90 minutes, particularly if you have swollen feet or ankles.

In the last few months of pregnancy your growing baby bump may make it more difficult for you to get in and out of the car. As time goes on, your bump may start getting in the way of the steering wheel. If this happens, you may need to stop driving. In some cars you can adjust the steering wheel and tilt it away from your bump.

Wearing your seat belt

When you wear it correctly, your seat belt will help protect you and your unborn child in a crash.

- Buckle the lap belt under your bump and over your hips.
- Never place the lap belt across your bump.



- Put the lap belt flat on your thighs, fitting it comfortably beneath your bump.
- Rest the shoulder belt between your breasts and off to the side of your bump.
- Never place the shoulder belt under your arm.
- Wear the belt as tight as possible.



Car crashes during pregnancy

If you're in a car crash (even a low impact one) during your pregnancy, go to your doctor or midwife for a check-up.

Getting to the hospital when you're in labour

Well before your due date make a plan for getting to the hospital. Don't drive yourself there if you think you're in labour. If you're on your own, use a taxi or call for an ambulance.

Driving after giving birth

You should not drive home from the hospital after giving birth.

VAGINAL DELIVERIES

If you've had a normal vaginal delivery or a vacuum or forceps delivery, you can drive once you feel able to. Generally, this means you should be comfortable and not in pain. Wait for any medication that can affect your driving (e.g. strong painkillers) to wear off.

CAESAREAN SECTIONS

Most women don't feel fit to drive for several weeks after a caesarean section. Every woman is different. How quickly you can return to driving will depend on your circumstances and recovery. Ask your doctor for advice on what is an appropriate time to wait before you drive again. Check your insurance cover for any restrictions on driving after a caesarean. Some companies may want your doctor to confirm you're fit to start driving again.

Keeping baby safe

CAR SEATS

Car seats keep your baby safe in a moving car. In a crash, car seats protect your baby by preventing them from being thrown around the vehicle. Car seats also absorb some of the impact.

- Always use a car seat correctly and in keeping with the manufacturer's instructions.
- A newborn baby's car seat should always be positioned facing rearwards.
- Never hold a baby in your arms or on your lap in a moving car.

Premature and low birth-weight babies

If you have a premature or low birth-weight baby, ask the hospital to assess if it is safe for the baby to travel in a baby seat before you are discharged. If you are in any doubt at all, consult the hospital or your GP for further advice.

Be a responsible driver

During your pregnancy it's your responsibility as a driver to:

- follow your doctor's or midwife's advice if you develop any problems during your pregnancy
- take your prescribed medications and check and manage any medical problems
- get professional advice on your medical fitness to drive if:
 - you develop a medical condition
 - your pre-existing condition changes during the term of your licence.

Useful resources

You will find a range of additional resources on the RSA website. These include;

Child Safety in Cars

www.rsa.ie/road-safety/road-users/passengers/children/child-safety-in-cars

Wearing your seatbelt during pregnancy (video)

www.rsa.ie/road-safety/road-users/passengers/pregnant-women

Fitting child car seats

www.rsa.ie/road-safety/road-users/passengers/children/child-seats

RSA 'Check it Fits' free child car seat checks service

www.rsa.ie/road-safety/road-users/passengers/children/check-it-fits

Car safety for premature or low birth-weight babies

www.rsa.ie/road-safety/road-users/passengers/children/child-safety-in-cars



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