

Be Prepared



Pregnancy

Whether you are experiencing a routine pregnancy or one that is considered high risk, going on an international assignment raises issues that need to be addressed before you go.

By doing some research now – and taking a bit of extra precaution while you're there – you can have a great experience and an even more joyous pregnancy. And Cigna Global Health Benefits will try to help you every step of the way.



Before you go.

Talk to your doctor.

Whether you are already pregnant or are hoping to be soon, make an appointment with your doctor. Tell him or her where you are going. Do some research about the health care system in your assignment country before you see your doctor. The more information you provide, the better the recommendations will be.

Take medications regularly?

Ask for 6-12 months' worth of prescriptions.

While doctors tend to limit the amount of medications given to pregnant women, you still may be taking some. If you are, get long-term prescriptions now — your Cigna plan may cover up to one year's worth.

Ask about all of your medications and supplements.

Speaking of medications, don't forget to share with your doctor which over-the-counter medications, vitamins and supplements you take. Just like prescription medications, they may have side effects. If your doctor allows you to take some, stock up and bring them with you.

Ask about vaccinations.

When you visit your doctor, ask if you are up to date on your vaccinations. Remember, vaccination during pregnancy needs special attention, so be sure to talk this through. If you do need vaccinations for Yellow Fever or Japanese Encephalitis, get in touch with a travel medicine expert. If you don't know one, contact Cigna.

Plan your travel.

In most cases, it is safe to travel during pregnancy. Cigna and most doctors suggest traveling during the second trimester. If you are traveling later than that (between 30 and 35 weeks), you must carry a letter from your doctor that states what your expected delivery date is.

While you're there.

Be ready for anything.

As soon as you arrive – or before you even depart – put the names of the best local hospitals and your new OB/GYN on a card you carry with you. Be sure to write it or have it written in the native language. Also, get familiar with the local emergency response and the country's health care system.

Do a little research before sampling the local cuisine.

Depending on where your assignment country is, you'll have to take precautions to avoid contaminated water and food. Make sure food is thoroughly cooked. Just say no to raw foods.

Explore labor and delivery options.

Different cultures have very different traditions when it comes to childbirth. In some countries, women rely on birthing coaches, known as "doulas." If you decide to use one, be sure she is certified, licensed and can speak both your language and the native language.

Decide on whether or not you want to breastfeed.

While it truly is a personal choice, the World Health Organization recommends breastfeeding. If you do decide to breastfeed, ask your doctor or women from your assignment country what "do's" and "don'ts" to follow in public. If you opt for formula, be sure to use sterile water.

Avoid fish that contain high levels of mercury – no matter where you are.

Eating fish that contains high levels of mercury has been associated with brain damage and developmental issues in babies. Shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tilefish have some of the highest levels.

For more detailed information, talk to your OB/GYN. You can also find information about which foods to avoid – and other helpful advice – on marchofdimes.com.

4 important questions to ask yourself

Where am I going to have my baby?

If you are going to a country where medical care is advanced and you speak the language, you're in the best situation. Simply go to CignaEnvoy.com to search for OB/GYNs and hospitals in your area.

If you are going to a country where medical care is not what you're used to and/or you don't speak the language, you may need to be much more aggressive in your research. And if you need assistance during this process, contact the International Service Center using the number on the back of your Cigna ID card.

What should I look for in a doctor?

When choosing an OB/GYN, you may want to see someone who specializes in prenatal care. Make an appointment to see him or her within a week of your arrival.

What capabilities should I look for in a hospital?

Be sure that the hospital where you plan to deliver is equipped to handle sick and premature newborns – whether you are high risk or not. Ask if the hospital has a lab for emergency blood transfusions. If not, find a lab nearby.

What else can I do to make things easier?

Make sure to bring all of your medical records with you. If you haven't done so, it's a good idea to get an electronic health record now. To learn more, go to myPHR.com. It's a free service.

If you don't speak the language, have an interpreter come with you on every visit. Cigna can help you find one.



Cigna is here to help. Reach out to us anytime.

This is a very special time in your life. And we want you to enjoy your pregnancy – and your assignment – as much as possible. The International Service Center is open 24/7/365. So feel free to contact us anytime. You can send a secure e-mail through CignaEnvoy.com or call the number on the back of your Cigna ID card. Whatever is easiest for you.

More Tips

- In developing countries, opt for a private hospital over a public one. They tend to have better care and more reliable ambulance service.
- If you are moving to a hot climate, be extra sure to drink enough fluids. To avoid potential issues, drink bottled water and beverages.
- If an emergency occurs, contact Cigna as soon as things are stabilized. We'll help coordinate your care with the hospital or doctor treating you.
- Want to learn more about the destination you are going to? Log on to CignaEnvoy.com for information including quality of health care, emergency response and more. You'll also find information about the culture, things to do, etc.
- To translate common medical terms in your new country's language, go to CignaEnvoy.com.

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