



# HAVE BABY WILL TRAVEL

Safety Tips for International  
Travel with Young Children

BY KARA TURNER

## USEFUL LINKS

Take extra precautions for children traveling alone. This site has some good advice – [airsafe.com/kidsafe/kidsolo.htm](http://airsafe.com/kidsafe/kidsolo.htm).

The ultimate source for airplane seating, in-flight amenities and airline information – [seatguru.com](http://seatguru.com).

## WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Here are my favorite traveling-with-kids websites:

[travelwithyourkids.com](http://travelwithyourkids.com)  
[havebabywilltravel.ca](http://havebabywilltravel.ca)  
[flyingwithkids.com](http://flyingwithkids.com)  
[flyingrugrats.com](http://flyingrugrats.com)

Staying safe is paramount when traveling overseas with young children, but the point of a vacation is to relax and enjoy some quality family time. So prepare for the worst, hope for the best and let the good times roll!

**1. Consider a child I.D. Wristband** printed with your cell phone number for busy airports or crowded destinations such as Disneyland. These are available from [mabel.ca](http://mabel.ca) or [lovablelabels.ca](http://lovablelabels.ca). For the more adventurous little ones, you might want to invest in an electronic child locator which beeps when they wander.

**2. Stay safe in the air.** Transport Canada recommends that children weighing less than 40lbs. (18kg.) be securely fastened in an appropriate child restraint system while traveling by plane. Even if your child is under the age of two, consider buying a separate seat for the child so that they can be safely buckled up during the flight. If this is not feasible, try to select a flight that is likely to have empty seats. If the child has their own seat, there is a more convenient alternative now approved for use on WestJet, Air Canada and all US carriers – the Child Aviation Restraint System (CARES). This harness-style seat belt, available to buy or rent from [littletraveller.ca](http://littletraveller.ca), is designed for children aged one to four weighing 22 to 44lbs. (10 to 20kg.). CARES has the same safety rating as a car seat but fits in a little stuff sack. It takes a minute to install and, best of all, weighs only 1lb. Which ever restraint system you choose, keep your child buckled up whenever possible.

**3. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.** If traveling internationally, make sure your child is up to date on their vaccinations and check with their doctor if they need any additional vaccines. Before you travel, ensure you have adequate travel insurance and find out where the local hospital is. If your child, like mine, has allergies learn a few key phrases in the native language. For example, “Mi hija tiene una alergia a los cacahuetes” is Spanish for, “My daughter has a peanut allergy.” If your child has a medical condition that may become an issue during the flight, make a flight attendant or gate agent aware of that possibility before the flight.

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Website: [trekescape.com](http://trekescape.com)

Pack a family first-aid kit in your checked-in luggage and include any specific requirements for your destination (such as tropical strength insect repellent). MEC sells a wide range of kits. In your hand luggage, pack a large Ziploc bag with any medications your child is on, plus some band-aids and travel-sized antihistamine, acetaminophen, oral re-hydration mix and antibiotic cream to tide you over in case of flight delays or lost luggage.

**4. Locate potential hazards.** When you arrive at your destination, take some time to baby proof your room. Especially if you are in a foreign country, but even at Grandma's, carefully inspect it for exposed wiring, dangling cords, potential poisons, choking hazards and unsafe stairs or balcony railings. Be aware that cribs or playpens provided by hotels may not meet Canadian safety standards. If you have any doubt, ask for a replacement or consider other options.

**5. Be careful what you consume.** Contaminated food or water cause common infections in travelers and children are often the most vulnerable. Before you travel, find out whether local tap water is safe to drink. If not, always use bottled water to drink and brush your teeth in. Specify no ice in drinks and beware of uncooked food, including salads and fruit that may have been washed in local water.

**6. Take care in the sun.** Regularly slather the whole family in SPF30+ when out and about in warm climates. Avoid sunstroke and heatstroke by limiting sun exposure to early morning and late afternoon. Dress children in loose cotton clothing and a hat and ensure plenty of fluids are available throughout the day.

**7. Finally, don't forget the holy grails of parenthood: Ziploc bags.** Have them in every size available along with baby wipes. Baby wipes come in handy for cleaning

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# Baby ON BOARD

## How to Keep You and Baby Happy in the Car

BY MARGARETTE BURNETTE



When my first child was an infant, I never seemed to be able to stock my car with everything I needed to run errands. No extra clothes were available when accidents happened, and the diaper bag always ran out of diapers or wipes at the worst possible time.

Finally, after weeks of trial and error, and listening to some experienced moms, my car is now organized and my little ones enjoy their quick road trips. The key is making sure the following four items are always in the car when baby is on board.

**1. Keep it clean.** The first must-have item is a box of baby wipes or cleaning towels. "Keep wipes everywhere. You can never have too many," says Stephanie Williams, a mother of two. Perhaps the biggest challenge in transporting little ones is the constant threat of spills and messes that can occur in the middle of a trip.

Williams has used wipes for everything from potty accidents to cleaning sticky fingers and faces. She says she'll continue using them even when her children are old enough to drive her around!

**2. In the bag.** The next essential accessory is a "just-in-case" diaper bag tucked away in the vehicle. Road trips leave parents at a disadvantage for diaper

changes, especially if they forgot to fill the diaper bag the night before. Eliminate the problem by simply putting extra clothes and diaper items in a small bag, and then place the bag in the pocket behind the front seat or underneath the seat. There is no need to worry about packing this sack every day, as if it were a diaper bag. It will simply be ready for occasional accidents.

**3. Not-so-fast food.** The third item to never leave home without is a snack to keep growling stomachs at bay. Keeping the car stocked with nutritious food helps eliminate the temptation to stop by a drive-thru for fast food. Pediatrician Denise Salerno, MD, warns that "it's best to put a strict limit on fast foods," since they have a high concentration of calories and salt.

**4. Seat of approval.** The most important product for every car is a properly installed car seat. Everyone knows that babies need safety seats, but a large percentage of child restraints are used incorrectly. Always read both your car seat manual and your vehicle owner manual before installing any child safety seat.

A few minutes to stock up the car with these items can mean the difference between a fun outing with the family or a stressful road trip. Now, the next step is figuring out how to get someone else to take care of the actual driving!

Margarette is a parenting writer and author of the *Chipper Kids™* children's book series. She welcomes your comments on her blog at [chipperkids.com](http://chipperkids.com). **CCM**



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hands, highchairs, toilet seats and anything baby decides to spit up on. Stow a pack in every bag and keep a handy stash of Ziplocs with them.

Then sit back, cross your fingers and enjoy your travels, safe in the knowledge that you have your bases covered.

Kara is a mum and the owner of Little Traveller baby equipment rentals in Calgary. CARES airplane seat belts are available to rent or buy from Little Traveller. Kara can be reached at [kara@littletraveller.ca](mailto:kara@littletraveller.ca) or 403-242-4067. For more information visit [littletraveller.ca](http://littletraveller.ca). **CCM**



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