Guest Blog: Trouble in Paradise

By Men-Jean Lee, MD, a maternal-fetal medicine physician and member of MotherToBaby's sister society, the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine

From gender reveal parties to pregnancy photoshoots and prenatal massage, pregnancies are being celebrated in new and sometimes extravagant ways. The travel trend of "babymoons" continues to grow in popularity and most go off without a hitch. Unfortunately, as a maternal-fetal medicine physician in Hawaii, I've seen my fair share of trips that do not go according to plan. If pregnant, consult your doctor or midwife, especially when flying or traveling far from home. Also keep these tips in mind if you are a considering a babymoon.

Women with high-risk pregnancy issues should consult their local maternal-fetal medicine physician to discuss any medical and obstetrical issues before putting a deposit down for babymoon. And what do you do if you end up being grounded? Save the money for a really fabulous push present!

Men-Jean Lee, MD, is a maternal-fetal medicine physician and associate professor at the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii at Manoa practicing at the Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children. She is a member of MotherToBaby's sister society, the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, the only national, professional organization specifically devoted to reducing high-risk pregnancy complications. Dr. Lee's research interests include maternal stress during pregnancy, diabetes, immigrant healthcare, and placental biology.

- **Bring Your Medications…And Use Them**
  Do you need medications that you can only get in the U.S.? Certain life-saving medications cannot be obtained in other parts of the world. Or maybe you are supposed to be checking your blood sugars if you are pregnant and have diabetes? Just because you are on holiday, doesn't mean you can let yourself go! Stick to your carb-controlled diet and your insulin, so that you don't end up in a hospital where there is not a medical intensive care unit.
- **Is Your Pregnancy "High Risk"?**
  Are you pregnant with twins or triplets? Did you deliver any of your older children earlier than 37 weeks? If so, you are at increased risk of preterm birth. Be aware that if you go into preterm labor on the beaches of Hawaii, you might get stranded and hospitalized in paradise until the babies are born! And if they are born "premie" or prior to 36 weeks, you might need to book a hotel to stay there until the babies are big enough to fly home.
- **Don't Fly After 36 weeks…and for Some women, Don't Fly at All**
  Are you at the end of your pregnancy? Experts recommend that most pregnant women stop flying once they've reached 36 weeks gestation. Air travel is not recommended at any time during pregnancy for women who have medical or obstetric conditions that may be exacerbated by a flight or that could require emergency care (e.g. a history of DVT [blood clot in a vein] or a pulmonary embolus [blood clot in the lung], stroke, heart attack, uterine cramping, leakage of fluid from the vagina, shortened cervix, or vaginal bleeding). If you have one of these conditions or if your doctor told you it's not safe, stay close to your OB care provider and the hospital where you plan to deliver.
- **Be Mindful of Zika "Hot Spots"**
  The Zika virus poses serious threats to your developing baby (for more info, see MotherToBaby's Zika Virus Fact Sheet). If your idea of the perfect babymoon is a tropical getaway, check to see if your destination has Zika-bearing mosquitoes. Parts of Mexico, South America, and most Caribbean islands are still on the Zika watch list. Unless you and your partner are committed to trading in your sunscreen for insect repellant or staying indoors with the windows closed, you might want to book a trip to picturesque Prince Edward Island!
- **Skip the Glass of Wine**
  While in vacation mode, you may be tempted to indulge in a glass of wine, a beer, or a margarita, but don't do it. There is no known safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Prenatal exposure to alcohol is the leading preventable cause of birth defects and developmental disabilities. Check out MotherToBaby's Alcohol Fact Sheet for more info.

Women with high-risk pregnancy issues should consult their local maternal-fetal medicine physician to discuss any

medical and obstetrical issues before putting a deposit down for babymoon. And what do you do if you end up being grounded? Save the money for a really fabulous push present!

Society for Maternal•Fetal Medicine
High-risk pregnancy experts

Men-Jean Lee, MD, is a maternal-fetal medicine physician and associate professor at the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii at Manoa practicing at the Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children. She is a member of MotherToBaby's sister society, the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, the only national, professional organization specifically devoted to reducing high-risk pregnancy complications. Dr. Lee's research interests include maternal stress during pregnancy, diabetes, immigrant healthcare, and placental biology.

Disclaimer: MotherToBaby Fact Sheets are meant for general information purposes and should not replace the advice of your health care provider. MotherToBaby is a service of the non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS). Copyright by OTIS, November 15, 2018.