

Baby proof your travels

Worried how your little one will manage the impossible task of sitting still on that flight? M&B shows you how to get ahead of any and every eventuality. After all, being forewarned is being forearmed!



BY ARUNDHATI NATH

DOES the idea of going on a relaxing holiday fill you with a fear of what comes before? Perhaps visions of running around your toddler on a plane, or dealing with the irritated glances of fellow travellers, making you wish the ground would open up and swallow you whole? It is difficult to keep a toddler still for a few minutes at home; so we imagine travelling with him could mean vivid nightmare scenarios playing in a reel in your head! However, proper planning and some patience could go a long way to make your trip with the kiddo a really fun and enjoyable one.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Before you plan your trip, check with your paediatrician about your child's vaccination schedule and if it overlaps with your potential holiday period. Also remember to check with your doctor for any allergies that need to be taken into account.

Archana Turaga, who travels extensively with her kids, feels that it is essential to

keep in mind your toddler's daily habits, like sleeping pattern, milk timings and poop breaks. "Our mode of journey also makes a difference, so travelling by car is not advised if they have motion sickness," Archana says.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

While travelling with kids, planning ahead of time is key to a great holiday. Book everything well in advance: your tickets, cabs and hotel rooms. Note down the things you'll need to pack for the trip in a diary. Try to travel with your partner or a family member, to ensure that help is at hand. Carry your child's birth certificate and in case of an international holiday, check the validity of his passport, since kids' passports need to be renewed every five years. Scan and email yourself a copy so that you have a back-up in case you lose the original.

Print the boarding passes from the airline website at home itself, so that you can avoid the rush at the airport. If your child is flying for the first

YOUR PACKING LIST FOR BABY

- Diapers. Stock up on sufficient diapers to last for the travel time
- Wipes. Carry a least a packet
- Blanket
- Diaper rash cream
- Plastic bags in different sizes: You won't know when these will be indispensable
- Hand sanitiser/soap strips
- Baby lotion
- Breast pump
- Tissues or washable bibs
- A few favourite toys/ colouring books and crayons
- Clothes, socks and sandals/shoes
- Medicines
- First-aid kit
- Car seat for safe air travel
- Foldable pram
- Enough baby food/snacks
- Lightweight utensils for feeding
- Formula, water and fruit juice
- Baby's sweater
- Bottles and nipples
- Pacifier
- A sunhat
- Insect repellent
- Baby's toothbrush/shampoo/soap/ toothpaste
- ID card for baby. Let your baby wear it at all times

time, explain the security check-in procedure to him so that he cooperates.

AT THE AIRPORT

The best thing you can do to start your trip well is to reach the airport before time. It also gives your toddler sufficient time to explore and look around the airport. Remind your little one about

the security check-in procedure once again before the actual event. Carry some of your child's favourite colouring books, toys and snacks to keep him occupied in the waiting lounge. Mother of one, Suparna Mukherjee Gera advises travelling mums to take care of the baby, as well as the purse. "It's very easy to get flustered and lose your purse. Carry a foldable pram till the boarding gate.



MUST CARRY:

- ✓ Children's birth certificate
- ✓ Passports
- ✓ ATM Cards/ Cash/ Credit Cards
- ✓ Driving license
- ✓ Airplane tickets and trip itinerary
- ✓ Photocopies of passport and driving license
- ✓ Documents of health and travel insurance
- ✓ Medicines
- ✓ Smartphone and its charger
- ✓ Camera and charger
- ✓ Cotton balls
- ✓ Band aid
- ✓ Backpack

This makes life a bit easier than having to hold your child in your arms," she says.

IN-FLIGHT

When it's the time to fly, try to adjust your child's nap time when it's the time to fly. Neha Chopra says, "It is a good idea to get him tired before takeoff." Getting your kid to doze off during the journey is a neat little trick if you can manage to pull it off. However, if he resists sleep at all costs, keep him engaged by giving him a new colouring book and crayons or a new toy.

Due to a drop in cabin pressure, your baby might feel dehydrated or have ear aches. Give him sufficient fluids like water or fruit juices to rehydrate him. Massage and give little tugs at the ears to ease the pain. Carry cotton balls to put into his ears and give him some candy to suck on.

"While travelling with kids, make sure you are well stocked in three Fs: food, fun and fabrics," says Neha. Pack an extra set of clothes for yourself and the baby in the hand luggage in case of an emergency, like if your baby vomits on the flight.

She also believes that children who travel are more social and observant. "Encourage them to look out of the window to discover new vistas."

Happy Journey! ■