

Oh, baby! Cruise takes a pregnant pause

Rene and Amy Rydberg were looking forward to their Royal Caribbean spring cruise to Bermuda. The New Jersey couple was excited and ready to celebrate, since they were expecting their first child that summer.

Rene had booked the voyage through Travelocity and everything seemed perfect until eight days later when he received the cruise line's final documents. There in bold print was a clause about pregnancy, which stated a woman pregnant by 24 weeks or more may not travel. Amy would be 27 weeks into her pregnancy at the time of the cruise. The couple was confused and heartbroken.

Lost in translation

The Rydbergs immediately called Royal Caribbean and the company confirmed that Amy was unable to sail and that they would have to contact their booking agent, Travelocity to make changes. Travelocity informed the couple that they would be receiving a refund of the \$1,756 purchase price, less \$200 (cancellation fee) and \$120 for the travel insurance.

Rene Rydberg thought this was unreasonable, since there was no information regarding pregnancy during the time he utilized Travelocity's booking engine. Travelocity stated the pregnancy restriction was written into the 'Terms and Conditions' that the Web site displays before a transaction is completed. Rydberg disagrees. "I read those terms and conditions myself and found no such restriction."

Rydberg was incensed and felt that burying a restriction in fine print before the transaction and then displaying it prominently in large bold print after the transaction was completed is a predatory selling practice. After getting nowhere with Travelocity Rydberg contacted Tripso for help.

Travelocity responds

I contacted Travelocity on the Rydberg's behalf. "Cruise lines do not permit women who are 24 weeks pregnant or more to board - even with permission from a physician," said Joel Frey, spokesperson for Travelocity. "We have recently updated our terms and conditions to note the number of weeks specifically and we refunded the penalty, travel insurance and booking in full for the Rydbergs because they will be unable to enjoy their trip as planned."

I commend Travelocity for doing right by the Rydbergs and for updating their terms and conditions to be more upfront with specific information regarding pregnancy.

Baby on board

In the world of cruising, pregnancy is regarded as a medical condition, and the cruise line may require a medical certificate establishing the passenger's due date and fitness to travel. Many cruise lines will not permit passengers who are more than 24 weeks into pregnancy to sail, so try to schedule your cruise sometime between the morning sickness and the midway mark.

The Internet can be a powerful tool for researching travel, but be aware that online travel sites usually make you pay the full amount on a credit card at the time you book, and you may face a cancellation fee or not be able to get a refund at all if you cancel at the last minute. Always read the travel operator's fine print and the Web site's policies before deciding to book.

As for the Rydbergs, they are happy with Travelocity doing right by them and they are hopeful to get on a Royal Caribbean cruise someday - maybe with the new baby in tow.

Sound off! Do you have a comment, an idea, a complaint or a problem for Anita to solve? Send her an e-mail and you might find yourself in her next column. And check out her blog, [ExpertCruiser.com](#)

About the Author

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Important Dates During Pregnancy , [Pregnancy .org](#)

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