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TIPS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN ON HOW TO MONITOR YOUR BABY'S MOVEMENTS

Feeling your baby's kicks and movement every day is a sign that the baby is doing well.

All babies have different patterns of movement. How and how much they kick and move varies a lot from baby to baby. There is no set standard for what is normal. Don't compare yourself to others. Get to know *your* baby's movements. Trust your instinct - you know your baby best.

THE BABY'S KICKS

Your baby's movements can be kicks, gentle pushes, stretches, wriggles and turns. Hiccups are not counted as movement.

Most women start to notice their baby's movements around week 18-20 of their pregnancy, but this can vary a lot. From around week 24-28, the movements are more predictable, with periods when the baby is awake and when it's asleep and not moving.

The kicks and movements will increase in number from mid-pregnancy and until week 32. At this point, they will stabilise at a level that will last until the birth.

The movements feel different towards the end of the pregnancy when the baby has less room to move around. However, the movements should not become less frequent or weaker.

HOW CAN YOU MONITOR YOUR BABY'S MOVEMENTS?

Set aside time each day to feel your baby moving when it's awake. Make it a habit! In this way, you will more easily notice any changes. It also strengthens your attachment to your baby and helps you prepare for your role as a mother.

Start in week 28 when the movements have become regular and the periods when the baby is awake and asleep are more predictable. It can help to lie on your left side. The flow of blood to the womb and placenta is best in this position. You can feel the baby's movements better when lying down, rather than standing or moving around.

There are several ways of monitoring movement. For some, it is enough to make a mental note of the baby's movements, while others find more systematic monitoring helpful. You can choose between two ways of doing this.

1. Counting kicks

Monitor how long it takes to feel your baby move ten times. It is also important to monitor the strength of the movements so that you notice if they become weaker. You can use the form: [My baby's movements \(PDF\)](#) / ([excel form](#)) to log your experience.

And/or:

2. Describe what the baby's movements feel like

Set aside 15 minutes each day to feel how your baby is moving. Log your experience in a diary or notebook.

These questions can help you with the monitoring:

- How strong are the movements?
- How is the baby moving?
- How much is the baby moving?

You should be able to answer the following questions after monitoring movements:

- Can you clearly feel the baby's kicks and movements?
- Are the movements as strong as usual?
- Is the baby moving in the same way as usual?

Regardless of which method of monitoring you use, it is important to do it every day and to pay close attention. Turn it into an enjoyable activity!

DECREASED FETAL MOVEMENTS

Decreased movements can be an indication that the baby is not doing well. The most important indication is that you clearly feel fewer kicks and movements or that the movements are weaker.

If you notice changes and are concerned about how your baby is doing, immediately contact the maternity ward. Don't wait until the next day. Your concerns will be taken seriously.

Are you unsure about whether your baby is moving less than usual?

If you are unsure about whether your baby is moving less than usual, make sure you eat and drink something. Then lie down on your left side and pay attention to your baby's kicks and movements. Make sure that you are somewhere quiet so that you can fully concentrate. Focus on your baby's movements for one to two hours.

Call the maternity ward immediately if:

- You do not feel any movement from the baby in the course of one to two hours.
- You feel less movement and/or weaker movements than is usual for your baby in the course of the one to two hours. (Don't know what is usual for your baby? A main rule is that a healthy baby rarely kicks and moves less than ten times in the course of two hours in a period it is usually awake.)
- You are still concerned and uncertain about the baby's activity pattern. Trust your instinct - you know your baby best.

If you feel plenty of movement and feel more calm, you do not need to contact the maternity ward.

Most mothers who experience an episode of decreased movements have straightforward pregnancies and give birth to healthy babies.