

PREGNANCY CHANGES IN MOTHER AND BABY

Most pregnancies last for 9 months or 38-42 weeks. There are many changes occurring in your body and that of your developing baby. Throughout your pregnancy, you will gain 24-35 pounds. Pregnancy is a time of change. As your body changes, your emotions change. You may feel more sensitive, grumpy, weepy, excited, happy, or sad. Your moods may change suddenly and frequently. This is all to be expected and will most likely go back to normal during the second trimester. There is a lot of planning to do before the baby comes. A baby is a big responsibility. There are many resources available to help you. Here are some of the highlights of the changes you and your baby will experience:

Month 1: You are beginning your first trimester of pregnancy. You miss your period and your body is making new hormones for the pregnancy. You might experience morning sickness (mild to severe nausea and vomiting associated with pregnancy) from the hormones. Morning sickness can occur at any time of the day and usually stops by the 3rd or 4th month. Eating saltine crackers before getting out of bed may help with the morning sickness. Eat small, frequent meals, about 6 a day, and snacks as needed. Having something in your stomach usually reduces morning sickness. Your breasts may enlarge and become tender. Your baby receives all his nutrients from you. It is important that you eat wisely, choosing healthy foods, since he needs good nutrition for good growth and development. You need to take a prenatal vitamin. If you are smoking, drinking alcohol, or using any unnecessary drugs, you need to stop. Having sex during the first trimester is safe. Your sex drive may go up or down during the pregnancy. Set up an appointment for a prenatal visit with your doctor. Your baby is called an embryo because he is not yet fully formed. His limbs are buds that will grow into arms and legs. His organs are beginning to form, his heart will start to beat, and his brain is forming. He is about 1/2 inch long and weighs less than one ounce.

Month 2: You may still experience morning sickness and feel tired. It is important to rest and take naps as needed. Your blood supply is increasing along with your cardiac output (blood flow). Your breasts may enlarge and become tender, requiring a good support bra or sports bra. The nipple area (aereola) may darken. You may urinate more frequently as the enlarging uterus is crowding out your bladder. Your baby is continuing to form. Eyelids are sealed shut, ears are forming, and the limb buds are maturing into ankles and wrists, fingers and toes. She moves around in the water sac quite comfortably. By the end of this month, she looks more like a person, is about 1 inch long and weighs about 1 ounce.

Month 3: The end of this month will complete your first trimester. Morning sickness may still be present as well as being tired. Your normal clothing may be getting tight around the waist and breasts as you are beginning to show. Wear pants with elastic waistbands and pull over tops. Maternity clothing may be too big at this time. You may develop a dark line down the center of your belly called linea nigra. This will lighten after you deliver your baby. Your baby is now called a fetus. He now has "buds" that eventually will become his baby teeth. It is possible to hear the baby's heartbeat with an instrument called a Doppler. Babies normally have fast heartbeats. He is about 4 inches long and weighs a little over 1 ounce.

Month 4: You are now in your 2nd trimester. You are starting to show as your belly grows. You should begin to feel more energetic. Morning sickness is usually gone by this time. Constipation (caused by hormonal changes and increased pressure in your lower abdomen) may be present. You may start to feel your baby move inside. She may move all around, kick, stretch, and move her arms; she swallows and hears your voice. She is 6-7 inches long and

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weighs about 5 ounces.

Month 5: Your uterus is at the level of your navel at 20 weeks. Your heart is beating faster and you still may need additional rest during the day. If you are not getting enough calcium, you may have leg cramps. Your joints and muscles are softening to allow for the passage of the baby. You may notice a "waddle" or loosening in your walk. Your baby is more active as he continues to develop and you feel his movements. He has fingernails, eyebrows, eyelashes, hair, regular sleep and wake cycles, and moves side to side, up and down. He is 8-12 inches long and weighs 1/2 to 1 pound.

Month 6: Your baby kicks a lot. You may feel the weight of your pregnancy on your back. Your uterus continues to stretch. Your baby has fine, soft hair all over her body. Her skin is red and wrinkled. She opens her eyes. Her fingerprints and toe prints can be seen. She has a good chance for survival with intensive care if she were born now. Her chance for survival increases the longer your pregnancy continues. She is 11-14 inches long and weighs 1 to 1-1/2 pounds.

Month 7: You are now in your third trimester. You may experience swelling in your ankles and hands throughout the day. Rest with your feet up during the day. Stretch marks may appear on your belly, hips, buttocks, or breasts. Braxton-Hicks contractions may be felt. These are practice contractions for your uterus as it prepares for labor. They are irregular and do not get closer together over time. The top of your uterus is several inches above your navel. Your breasts continue to enlarge. Having sex during the third trimester is safe unless your doctor tells you otherwise. Your baby gains most of his weight during the third trimester. He can suck his thumb, see light, hear sound, and cry. He is about 15 inches long and weighs about 3 pounds.

Month 8: Your breasts may leak colostrum (the first milk). This is normal. Wearing a breast pad will help prevent your bra from becoming wet. Finding a comfortable sleeping position may be a challenge. Your belly is large and you may need to urinate often. You might feel short of breath and need to rest during the day. Avoid lying on your back when sleeping because the weight of the baby and your uterus can put too much pressure on your major blood vessels, possibly causing problems with your blood pressure and blood flow. The Braxton-Hicks contractions continue preparing your uterus for labor. Your baby continues to grow rapidly producing the needed baby fat. Her skin is not as wrinkled as during the second trimester. She is 18 inches long and weighs about 5 pounds.

Month 9: You are in your last month of pregnancy! The baby is pushing on your bladder causing you to urinate often. Finding a comfortable sleeping position continues to be a challenge. Swelling of your ankles and hands is common. Braxton-Hicks contractions continue. The baby moves down into your pelvis as he prepares for labor. You may be able to breathe easier as he "drops" down into your pelvis. Your cervix begins to dilate (open up) and efface (thin out) to make preparations for the birth. Your baby is full term. He will turn into the birthing position (head down) around 34-36 weeks. His lungs are mature. He continues to grow rapidly, putting on about one ounce every day or 1/2 pound per week. He is 18-21 inches long and weighs between 6-9 pounds.

Contact your doctor if you develop any problems during your pregnancy.

Seek immediate medical assistance if you develop any of the following:

- Spotting (like a light period)

This material has been provided by your doctor as an educational tool and is not meant to take the place of professional care. Please consult your doctor for any questions, concerns or changes in your condition.

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- Weight loss and possible dehydration because of severe vomiting
- Fever greater than 100
- Severe headache not relieved with acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Cramps
- Sudden swelling of hands or feet
- Fluid leakage (water breaks)
- Regular contractions that get closer with time
- If you do not feel your baby move for 2-3 hours (during the last trimester)