

Pregnancy Stages

1st Month - Conception to About Week 8 (after your last period)

Your Baby

By the end of this period, your baby has grown from about $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 inch long inside a beginning sac of amniotic fluid (bag of waters).

Hereditary characteristics were set from the moment the mother's egg (ovum) and the father's sperm met.

Father's sperm has already determined your baby's sex.

Brain and nervous system are forming.

Heart and lungs are beginning to form.

Tiny spots for ears, eyes and nose are appearing.

Arm and leg buds are forming.

Your Body

You were two weeks pregnant when you missed your first period, and you've already been pregnant six weeks when you missed your second period.

Your breasts now begin to feel tender and tingly.

Your pregnancy test turned positive about 10 days after you missed your first period.

You may feel nausea ("morning sickness"), but it can come any time of the day.

You haven't gained weight or changed your body size this month.

The placenta is forming and beginning to produce hormones that prepare your body for pregnancy.

You may feel unusually sleepy and tired.

Your uterus will grow larger, softer and rounder, but it is down behind the pubic bone where you can't feel it.

Your Responsibility

Make an appointment to begin prenatal care.

Check with your health care provider before taking any medications.

Avoid cigarettes and alcoholic drinks; limit your drinks of colas, teas and coffee that have caffeine.

Avoid having any x-rays now that you are pregnant.

Eat a balanced diet of whole grain breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, milk products and meat, fish or other sources of protein.

Discuss with your partner any positive or negative feelings you both have about this pregnancy.

Decide how and when you want to tell your family and friends, and maybe your employer, about your pregnancy.



2nd Month - Weeks 8 - 12 (after your last period)

Your Baby

Your baby grows to be about 2 ¼ inches long and weighs about ½ to 1 ounce by the end of this month.

A distinct umbilical cord has formed.

Its head is large because its brain is growing faster than its other organs.

Its heart beats.

Its stomach, liver and kidneys are forming.

This is a critical period in developing your baby's structures for seeing and hearing.

Cartilage, skin and muscles are starting to give shape to your baby's body.

Its fingers and toes are forming.

Its fingernails are beginning to appear.

Its facial features are forming.

Your Body

The placenta continues to grow and make more hormones.

Your breasts increase in size and the area around your nipples begins to darken.

Your vaginal secretions are becoming thicker, whiter and stickier; the tissues in and around your vagina are bluish from the heavier blood supply brought in to nourish the baby.

Your growing uterus crowds into the space next to your bladder and you begin to urinate more frequently.

You may still have nausea, and it may be more noticeable in the morning.

You may still be sleepier and more tired than usual.

Your waistline may begin to get bigger.

Your uterus is still small enough to lie behind your pubic bone but it is softer, rounder and larger now; it may feel like a small lump above your pubic bone by the end of the month.

You may gain a pound or two by the end of this month.

Your Responsibility

Get a prenatal check-up this month and plan to have them regularly.

Ask for your prenatal test results such as your blood pressure, weight and urine each time.

Know your blood type and Rh factor.

Ask for your hemoglobin or hematocrit results to know if you are anemic.

Rest and relax; you won't need this much sleep later.

Start a daily habit of exercise – walk, swim, bike.

Avoid cigarettes, alcohol, caffeine, junk foods and any medications unless prescribed by your doctor for use during pregnancy.



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Take prenatal vitamins and iron as prescribed.

Eat a balanced diet – plenty of whole grain breads and cereals.

Try to enroll in an “Early Bird” prenatal class.

Share with your partner your ideas and worries about how pregnancy is affecting the both of you because everyone has some feelings of doubt.

Talk with good friends or family members who are parents about their experiences in the first few months of pregnancy.

If you have insurance, find out what maternity and baby benefits you have.



3rd Month - Weeks 12 - 16

Your Baby

Your baby measures about 6 inches long and weighs about $\frac{1}{4}$ pound by the end of this month.

Amniotic fluid around your baby equals 1 cup.

Your baby swallows amniotic fluid and its tiny kidneys return the fluid back into the amniotic sac.

The umbilical cord is well formed and blood is circulating between your infant and the placenta.

Your baby can move but it is still too tiny to be felt by the mother.

Its heart beats 120 to 160 beats per minute.

Your baby's vocal cords are formed.

The sex of your baby is easy to tell now, if you could see inside the uterus.

By the end of this month, your baby's ears, arms, hands, fingers, legs, feet and toes will be completely formed.

Reflex movements allow your baby's elbows to bend, legs to kick and fingers to form a fist.

Its taste buds are forming.

Its neck is well defined and its head (still the largest part) can be held erect.

Your Body

Your appetite may begin to increase by this time.

Your nausea begins to be more infrequent.

You may notice some tendency to constipation as hormones of pregnancy cause your bowel activity to be more sluggish.

You may sweat more easily than usual.

Your uterus is now big enough to be felt above the pubic bone; you may even notice it gets hard from a contraction.

The placenta is now completely formed and hormones are produced in amounts needed to keep your pregnancy healthy.

You'll begin to feel more energetic by the end of this month.

Pregnancy may seem like a more stressful time of feeling all sorts of emotions; you may be happy and sad without any good reason that you can think of.

Your Responsibility

Get your prenatal check-up this month.

Eat a balanced diet with plenty of protein, fresh fruits and vegetables.

Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water each day.

Avoid cigarettes, alcohol, caffeine and any unprescribed medication.



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Get some exercise every day – like walking 15 minutes each day.

Avoid using paints (except latex), pesticides and aerosol sprays during your pregnancy.

Examine your budget and begin to set aside some money for baby items.

Ask about any changes in your body that worry you.

Allow yourself and your partner time to adjust to both negative and positive feelings about this pregnancy; besides your partner, you may want to have someone else you can share all of your feelings with who won't laugh at or judge you.



4th Month - Weeks 16 - 20

Your Baby

Baby will measure about 10 inches long and weigh about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound by the end of this month. The amniotic fluid increases a lot this month and your baby enjoys moving about freely inside the amniotic sac. Its kidneys now make urine. Hair begins to appear on its head. A fine downy hair (lanugo) begins to appear over your baby's body. Its eyebrows and eyelashes begin to grow. Its skin begins to fill out with fat. It starts a growth spurt in both length and weight. Baby's movements may become strong enough for some to be felt by the mother by the end of this month.

Your Body

Your uterus grows to just below your navel by the end of this month. Your weight starts to increase by about $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 pound a week now; you may gain about 3 to 4 pounds this month. The placenta secretes hormones into your body that helps to soften some of your joints and muscles to make labor and delivery easier. Your appetite increases so you may be hungry more often. Cravings may start for certain foods and may continue throughout pregnancy. Your nipples and the area around them become much darker in color. A line down the middle of your abdomen may darken (linea nigra). You may have some tendency now to become more susceptible to urinary tract infections so you need to drink 6 to 8 glasses of water each day. Your pregnancy is now beginning to show. You are less tired and fatigued now; you may find you are beginning to enjoy being pregnant.

Your Responsibility

Get your prenatal check-up this month. Continue to eat a balanced diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables. Avoid caffeine drinks, cigarettes, alcohol and medications (unless prescribed). Get some regular exercise – work up to walking at least one mile a day. Make sure that seat belts fit low over your hips. Learn and practice the Kegel and pelvic rock exercises every day.



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Lie down and get your feet up for at least 30 minutes a day.

Continue to take your prenatal vitamins and iron.

Pick out some comfortable clothes to wear as you change size.

If you are employed, find out the procedures for maternity leave.

Talk with your partner about what you both think the baby will be like: its sex, hair color, eye color, personality and also about what it will be like to be responsible for a new baby.

5th Month - Weeks 20 - 24

Your Baby

Your baby will weigh about 1 ½ pounds and be about 12 inches long by the end of this month. Its skin is covered by a white cheesy secretion (vernix caseosa) that protects its skin as it moves in the amniotic fluid.

Its heartbeat is now easy to hear with a doppler.

Movements of its arms and legs are easier for you to feel now.

Some hair may be present on its head.

Its eyelids are still closed.

Its skin is wrinkled and red but slowly being filled out with fat.

Its fingernails continue to grow.

Your Body

You will continue to gain about ¾ pound a week now or about 3 to 4 pounds a month.

Your baby will begin to move a lot; you will notice certain patterns of quiet and activity.

The top of the uterus can be felt at the navel or just above.

Your breasts continue to grow larger; they may get softer and the veins will start to show.

You may be more conscious of colostrum leaking from your breasts.

Constipation may become more troublesome now and may continue through the end of pregnancy.

Your hair may begin to feel thicker and oilier.

You usually feel good; people begin to talk about how well you look – you have the “bloom of pregnancy”.

You may have some feelings from time to time about not being able to cope; this can happen almost anytime during pregnancy.

Your Responsibility

Continue your prenatal check-ups.

Find out about classes for expectant couples in your area and make plans to enroll in time to learn the breathing and relaxation exercises needed for labor.

Continue to eat a balanced diet making sure you have enough milk and milk products.

Keep up the routine of walking every day and doing the Kegel and pelvic rock exercises.

Avoid smoking, alcohol, junk foods, caffeine drinks and unprescribed medications.

Be careful to remember your vitamins and iron supplements every day.

Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water or other fluids each day.

Take time to purchase one or more well-fitting support bras.



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Take time for a rest period on your side every day (left is better for circulation to your baby).

Talk about any concerns you or your partner may have about the responsibilities you will have to assume as parents.

Seek out special friends and family members to help you to deal with depressed or scared feelings, as well as sharing the fun and anticipation that goes with having a baby.

6th Month - Weeks 24 - 28

Your Baby

Your baby will measure about 12 to 15 inches long and weigh about 2 to 2 ½ pounds by the end of this month. Parts of the baby will be big enough to be felt by the doctor or nurse when they examine your abdomen. Your baby can respond to noises from the outside; it may move or become quiet. It can kick, cry and hiccup. Its skin is still wrinkled and red. Its eyelids can now open and close; its eyes are almost completely developed for life outside. Ridges for fingerprints are forming.

Your Body

You may have occasional heartburn, especially if you eat heavy, greasy or spicy foods. Your uterus is now felt above the navel. You may notice some tightening and relaxing of your uterus – called Braxton-Hicks contractions, a way the uterus has of getting you prepared for labor. Your sex drive may increase or decrease; it may change from week to week. Stretch marks may show up on your abdomen, hips and breasts as you gain weight. Your weight gain continues to be about 3 to 4 pounds a month. Your appetite is good; you have probably forgotten about nausea most of the time now. You may find yourself dwelling on all the things that can go wrong with your baby; most women do at some time in pregnancy. You find yourself getting more and more involved with your baby as it grows inside you. You look healthy – there is a special glow to your skin and a sparkle in your eyes.

Your Responsibility

Get your prenatal check-up on schedule – even if you feel great. If you plan to breast feed, find out how to prepare your breasts and nipples; if you plan to bottle feed, then check on the supplies you will need. Take rest periods as needed to avoid drooping at the end of the day; try to lie on your left side and relax. Continue to eat a good diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Start collecting items for the baby's first few weeks. When family or friends ask, let them know what you and the baby will need. Talk with other parents about their childbirth experiences; if they scare you, write down questions to ask your doctor or nurse. Take time to talk about how you feel about your body changing.



7th Month - Weeks 28 - 32

Your Baby

Your baby now measures about 16 inches long and will weigh a little over 2 ½ to 3 pounds by the end of the month.

Its body is now covered with fine, soft hair called “lanugo”.

Its fingerprints are set.

It will have definite periods of sleeping and waking.

It moves frequently with noticeable kicking and stretching.

It practices thumb sucking.

Its brain and nervous systems now mature rapidly.

It starts to store iron and will continue until time to be born.

If a boy, its testicles will start to descend into the scrotum.

Your Body

Your uterus is now moving up closer to your rib cage; you may be conscious of kicking against your ribs.

You can watch your abdomen move as your baby moves about.

Another person may be able to hear the heartbeat by placing an ear on your abdomen.

Your breasts may leak enough to need to wear padding in your bra.

You may notice some swelling of your feet, ankles and hands by the end of the day – especially if it has been hot or you have been on your feet a lot during the day.

Your weight may tend to increase faster than you expect; this begins the period of greatest growth for your baby.

You may begin to tire more easily these days.

You may begin to feel a bit more awkward in moving about; you may also notice a bit of light-headedness as you get up from a lying down position.

You may begin to be aware of a loosening in the pelvic bones when you walk.

Your Responsibility

Get your prenatal check-up this month.

It is late to be starting prenatal classes so you need to hurry if you have put it off.

Eat a balanced diet with plenty of protein and iron rich foods like liver, eggs and meat.

Continue to drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluids a day.

Practice relaxation and breathing exercises each day.

Tour the labor and delivery section of the hospital.



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Start thinking about items you will need the first 6 weeks at home – convenience foods, paper dishes, disposable diapers or diaper service.

Plan some special times with your partner.

Take some extra time for yourself to do things you want to do.

Continue to talk about your feelings, being pregnant and the responsibilities that face both you and your partner.

If you are working, discuss with your health care team how close to delivery you will want to work.



8th Month - Weeks 32 - 36

Your Baby

Your baby gains about 2 pounds this month; by the end of the month it will weigh about 5 ½ pounds and will be about 18 inches long.

All body systems and organs are now mature enough by the end of this month that your baby should be all right if it should be born early but still needs that extra time of growing in your uterus.

Its skin is smooth as fat begins to fill out the wrinkles.

Its eyes are open.

The soft, downy hair gradually disappears.

It is still active with noticeable patterns of sleep and wakefulness.

It may settle down into the position for birth.

Your Body

The top of your uterus is now up near your rib cage.

You may have trouble breathing when the baby pushes up against your lungs.

Your heartburn may increase.

You may have trouble sitting or lying comfortably for long periods of time.

You may have trouble with hemorrhoids.

You can feel the parts of the baby through your abdominal wall.

You begin to tire easily.

You may find this month your most uncomfortable one physically.

Your vaginal secretions increase.

You may sweat more easily.

You may need to urinate frequently day and night as the baby's head crowds your bladder.

Your Responsibility

Plan to get a prenatal check-up every two weeks this month.

Eat a balanced diet of small frequent meals.

Drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid each day.

Continue your exercise program of walking and stretching.

Practice exercises learned in your childbirth education class.

Make financial arrangements with the hospital.

Begin to make plans for someone to help you around the house after the birth.



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- Make arrangements with a pediatrician, family doctor or clinic for baby's health care after birth.
- Practice relaxation techniques during Braxton-Hicks contractions (normal tightening and releasing of the muscles of the uterus).
- Review what activities will take place during labor and delivery.
- Discuss names for the baby with your partner.



9th Month - Weeks 36 - 40

Your Baby

Your baby grows 2 ½ inches and gains 2 pounds – now weighs 6 ½ to 7 ½ pounds and is about 20 inches long. The amniotic fluid equals about 1 quart.

Your baby settles into a head down position, if this hasn't already happened.

Baby may seem quieter since there is less space to move about.

Its definite sleep and activity periods continue.

Its eye color is slate blue, but that will probably change after birth.

Its fingernails become complete and may grow long.

All your baby's body systems and organs continue to mature; it will be ready to take that first breath and grow on its own just as soon as it is born.

Your Body

You see your abdomen getting bigger and wonder how much longer you have before birth.

The Braxton-Hick's contractions are more frequent.

Your abdomen may look lopsided as baby moves arms and legs or shifts position.

You tire easily and frequently feel drowsy.

Your sleep may be interrupted by the need to urinate and/or change positions.

Your feet and hands may swell.

You may feel pressure low in pelvis from baby settling into position for birth.

You are tired of being pregnant and ready for delivery.

Your Responsibility

Get a prenatal check-up each week until baby arrives.

Continue to eat a balanced diet but you may be more comfortable with smaller meals eaten more frequently.

Continue to exercise and practice for childbirth.

Limit any out-of-area travel now.

Pack what you need for labor.

Pack what to take to the hospital.

Set aside clothes for you and baby to wear home.

List people and phone numbers to call when labor begins.

Take time to treat yourself and your partner to something extra special for the both of you.

Cover your mattress and favorite chair with plastic just in case your bag of water breaks.