



# Your baby's movements



**It is important for you to get to know your baby's movements during pregnancy and what you should do if you have any concerns.**

## When will I start to feel my baby move?

Starting to feel your baby move is a very exciting time in your pregnancy. Most women will start to feel their baby moving when they are between 16 and 22 weeks pregnant. If this is your first baby, you may start feeling your baby move a little bit later than this.

Some mothers report that these movements feel like "flutters". As your baby grows and changes position, you will become more aware of different movements such as the baby's legs and arms moving, rolling sensations and some babies get the hiccups.

## Why are movements important?

This is how your baby communicates with you and is also a sign of their wellbeing. Babies are like us; when they are well, they are active and when they are sick, they are less active. If a baby is unwell, usually one of the first signs a woman will notice is a change in their movements.

## How much should my baby move?

Every baby is unique. Some babies may be more active in the evening and other babies may be more active in the morning. It is important that you begin to take note of your baby's specific pattern of movements. Most babies will have a pattern of movements by the third trimester (28 weeks gestation).

Babies do not move all the time. All babies will have short periods of being quiet or asleep, which is normal. Before birth, babies may have similar sleep, wake cycles to those of a newborn baby.

If your baby's movements change at a time when they are normally very active, then there may be a cause for concern. Sometimes it is harder to notice movements when you are standing, walking or if you are busy doing other things.

Movements are best felt when you are relaxed and lying or sitting down. Although every baby is different, as a general guide, most healthy babies move at least 10 times during a 2 hour period. These movements can include rolling, stretching, jabs and kicks. If you think your baby's movements have decreased in strength or frequency, contact your healthcare provider immediately, do not wait until the next day.



## Is it normal for my baby's movements to slow down in the last few weeks before birth?

No, your baby's movements should not decrease in strength or frequency in the last few weeks before birth. As you get closer to birth (after 36 weeks gestation), there is less room for your baby to move which can cause you to notice slight changes to the type of movements. Women often describe more rolling, squirming and pressing movements that are more forceful at this time, but the strength and frequency of movements should not change.

## What should I do if I am concerned about my baby's movements?

If you are concerned about how often your baby is moving or the strength of your baby's movements, contact your healthcare provider immediately. Your midwife or doctor will need to assess you and your baby. This will involve checking your observations (vital signs) and monitoring your baby's heart rate as well as other investigations if necessary, such as an ultrasound scan or blood tests.

## What do I do if I keep having concerns about my baby's movements?

Remember that you are the one who knows your baby's movements best. It is important that you contact your healthcare provider straight away, even if you have contacted them before, to assess both you and your baby.



## Birth Unit Contact Information

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