



| stages of pregnancy |

Understanding how your baby develops and the physical changes you will experience – and how to cope with them – will help you have the healthiest pregnancy possible.

Your baby needs a full 40 weeks to grow and develop. Healthcare providers calculate weeks of pregnancy starting at the first day of your last period, usually about two weeks before conception.

Trimesters of pregnancy are defined by your baby's development and are not exactly equal.

FIRST TRIMESTER (WEEKS 1-14)

What to expect

Some women have no symptoms during the first weeks of pregnancy. However, it's normal to experience bloating, tiredness, breast tenderness or enlargement, frequent urination and food cravings. Some women have morning sickness (nausea or vomiting), which can happen any time of day or night. Normal weight gain in the first trimester is two to four pounds.

Comfort measures

Exercise: It's important to get regular exercise during pregnancy. See "Frequently asked questions" elsewhere in this packet for more information on exercise during pregnancy.

Fatigue (feeling tired): Get plenty of rest. Schedule 15-minute rest periods throughout your day.

Nausea (morning sickness):

- Keep a small amount of food in your stomach at all times. Eat six to eight small meals a day rather than three regular meals.
- Avoid greasy, highly seasoned, high-fat foods. A bland diet is easier to digest.

- First thing in the morning, eat something dry such as toast or crackers. Avoid drinking liquids when you first wake up.
- Drink water or other non-caffeinated drinks between meals.
- Ginger or ginger ale may improve nausea.
- Get plenty of exercise and rest.

Your developing baby

Following is a general estimate of your baby's week-to-week growth and development.

- Week 1** First day of your last period
- Week 3** Conception
- Week 4** Spinal cord begins to develop
- Week 5** Heart begins to beat
- Week 7** Brain and spinal cord formed
- Week 9** Baby (embryo) is moving
- Week 10** Lungs, liver and kidneys begin to develop
- Week 11** Face, fingers, arms, legs, eyes and external genital organs form
- Week 14** Heartbeat can be heard

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SECOND TRIMESTER (WEEKS 15-30)

What to expect

Your energy level and appetite usually increase, and morning sickness improves. Some women experience constipation, heartburn/indigestion, backache, sleeplessness or swollen ankles. Normal weight gain is about 12 pounds and most women begin to “look pregnant.”

Comfort measures

Exercise: Continue safe physical activities such as short walks or stationary cycling.

Constipation: Drink more fluids and eat high-fiber foods such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Increase physical activity.

Backaches: Use good posture, avoid heavy lifting (including toddlers!) and wear flat shoes.

Heartburn/indigestion: Eat frequent, small meals rather than three large meals. Avoid fried or spicy foods.

Swollen feet/ankles: Elevate your feet when sitting.

Sleeplessness: Relax by reading or listening to music at bedtime.

Your developing baby

- Week 17** Skin is transparent
- Week 18** Baby has fingernails, fingerprints and may suck thumb
- Week 22** Baby movement noticeable (between weeks 16 and 22)
- Week 26** Baby may cough or hiccup
- Week 27** Skin is opaque, red and wrinkled; eyes open slightly; baby can see
- Week 29** Fat builds up under skin

THIRD TRIMESTER (WEEKS 31-40)

What to expect

As your baby grows, you may become short of breath, urinate more often and leak urine when you cough or sneeze. As your pelvis changes you may feel some discomfort in your pelvic joints. You may develop hemorrhoids. Weight gain should continue at about a pound a week. You may feel more tired and have difficulty sleeping. Some women experience Braxton Hicks contractions (warm-up contractions), which are weak, irregular and usually painless. If you have contractions, notify your provider.

Comfort measures

Exercise: Continue safe physical activities.

Shortness of breath: Lie on your side instead of your back; raise your upper body using pillows.

Urine leakage: Perform Kegel exercises to strengthen your pelvic muscles. Tighten the same muscles you use to stop the flow of urine; hold for five seconds and relax. Repeat 10 times. Do Kegels several times each day.

Hemorrhoids: Eat high-fiber foods and drink plenty of liquids to prevent constipation. If hemorrhoids become bothersome, notify your healthcare provider.

Bedtime discomfort: Lie on your left side with one leg bent, and use pillows between your knees and under your stomach.

Fatigue: Rest frequently and don't overdo it.

Your developing baby

- Week 32** Lungs are still developing
- Week 38** Baby's head drops into mother's pelvis
- Week 40** Estimated date of delivery

