

How Your Baby Grows

Month 1

Your baby

Tiny limb buds appear. These grow into your baby's arms and legs.
Your baby's heart and lungs begin to form. By the 22nd day, the heart starts to beat.
Your baby's neural tube begins to form. This becomes the brain and spinal cord.
By the end of the first month, your baby is about 1/4 inch long.

Your body

Your body is making lots of hormones that help your baby to grow. Hormones can make you feel moody or cranky.
Your breasts may get bigger. They may hurt and tingle.
You may feel sick to your stomach. This is called morning sickness, even though it can happen any time of day.
Try eating crackers and smaller meals.
You may crave some foods or hate foods you usually like.
You may feel tired. Rest when you can.

Prenatal care guide

Visit your health care provider for your first prenatal care checkup as soon as you think you are pregnant.
Take a multivitamin with at least 400 micrograms of the B vitamin folic acid every day to help reduce the risk of birth defects of the brain and spinal cord.
Ask your health care provider before taking any prescription drugs, over-the-counter products or herbal products.
Stop smoking, drinking alcohol and taking street drugs.

Month 2

Your baby

Your baby's major body organs, like the brain, the heart and lungs, are forming.
The placenta is working. The placenta grows in your uterus and supplies the baby with food and oxygen through the umbilical cord.
Your baby's ears, ankles, wrists, fingers and toes are formed. Eyelids form and grow but are sealed shut.
By the end of the second month, your baby is about 1 inch long and still weighs less than 1/3 ounce.

Your body

Your breasts may still be sore and are getting bigger. Your nipples and the area around them begin to get dark.
You have to go to the bathroom more often because your uterus is growing and pressing on your bladder.
You may still have morning sickness.
You may feel tired and need to rest more often.
Your body makes more blood.

Prenatal care guide

Visit your health care provider for one prenatal care checkup.
Eat a variety of healthy foods from the five major food groups: grains; fruit; vegetables; dairy products; and meats and proteins.
Your health care provider probably will prescribe prenatal vitamins. Your prenatal vitamin should contain at least 400 micrograms of folic acid.
Drink at least six to eight glasses of water, juice or milk every day.

Month 3

Your baby

Your baby's fingernails and toenails are formed.

Your baby's mouth has 20 buds that become baby teeth.

Fine hairs begin to form on your baby's skin.

You can hear your baby's heartbeat for the first time. Ask your provider to let you listen.

By the end of the third month, your baby is about 2 1/2 to 3 inches long and weighs about 1 ounce.

Your body

You may still feel tired and have morning sickness.

You may have headaches and get lightheaded or dizzy. If these symptoms don't go away, tell your health care provider. Talk to your provider before you take any medicine for a headache.

You may have gained 2 to 4 pounds by now. Your clothes may begin to feel tight.

Prenatal care guide

Visit your health care provider for one prenatal checkup.

You have a slightly increased need for almost all vitamins and minerals to nourish your baby. A healthy diet helps to meet these needs.

You may have gained 2 to 4 pounds by now. A woman who starts pregnancy at a normal weight should gain 25 to 35 pounds during pregnancy. Ask your health care provider how much weight you should gain.

Exercise can be beneficial. Walking is a good choice. Check with your health care provider before starting an exercise program.

If your health care provider recommends prenatal testing using chorionic villus sampling (CVS), you can have the test now.

Month 4

Your baby

Your baby moves, kicks and swallows.

Your baby's skin is pink and see-through.

The placenta keeps providing food for the baby. But it also can pass along bad things that you take in, like alcohol, nicotine and other drugs.

By the end of the fourth month, your baby is about 6 to 7 inches long and weighs about 4 to 5 ounces.

Your body

You may be more hungry as your morning sickness goes away. You also may have more energy. But you may start to have heartburn. Try eating four or five smaller meals each day instead of three larger ones. And don't eat spicy food.

Near the end of this month, you may feel your baby move for the first time.

You gain about 1 pound a week. Your belly begins to show. You may need to wear maternity clothes and bigger bras now.

It's OK for you and your partner to have sex if you want. It won't hurt the baby. You may have to try new positions as your belly gets bigger. Do what's comfortable for you.

Prenatal care guide

Visit your health care provider for one prenatal care checkup.

Pregnant women need extra iron--more than even a good diet can supply. Your doctor may recommend iron supplements.

You'll probably gain about a pound a week, or 12 to 14 pounds, during the second trimester (months 4 to 6).

If your health care provider recommends prenatal testing using amniocentesis or a blood test called a triple screen for Down syndrome and neural tube defects, you can have them at 15 to 18 weeks.

Month 5

Your baby

Your baby becomes more active. He/she can turn from side to side and sometimes head over heels.
Your baby goes to sleep and wakes up.
Your baby grows a lot during this month.
By the end of the fifth month, your baby is about 10 inches long and weighs 1/2 to 1 pound.

Your body

You should feel the baby move inside you this month. If you don't, tell your health care provider.
Your heart beats faster.
You may need eight or more hours of sleep each night. Rest and take breaks during the day if you can. Don't push yourself.

Prenatal care guide

Visit your health care provider for one prenatal care checkup.
Your baby's growth and weight gain can be affected if you're smoking, drinking or taking drugs. It's never too late to quit.
Eat a healthy, nutritious diet and drink lots of juice, water and milk every day.

Month 6

Your baby

Your baby's skin is red and wrinkled. It's covered with fine, soft hair.
Your baby can kick strongly now.
Your baby's eyes are almost completely formed. Soon they can start to open and close.
By the end of the sixth month, your baby is about 12 inches long and weighs 1 1/2 to 2 pounds.

Your body

The skin on your belly may itch. You may see stretch marks. Use lotion and wear loose clothes.
Your back may hurt. Don't stand for long periods of time. And don't lift heavy things.
You may feel pain down the sides of your belly as your uterus gets bigger.
You may have constipation. Drink more water or fruit juice. Eat more foods with fiber, like fruits and vegetables.
You can still have sex, but stop if you feel pain or cramping.

Prenatal care guide

Visit your health care provider for one prenatal care checkup.
To help with heartburn, try eating four or five smaller meals during the day.
Do not take laxatives or antacids without asking your health care provider.

Month 7

Your baby

Your baby can open and close their eyes and suck their thumb.
Your baby kicks and stretches.
Your baby responds to light and sound.
You will definitely feel your baby moving. As your baby grows, the movements may feel different. For example, you may feel a "rolling" sensation.
By the end of the seventh month, your baby is about 15 to 16 inches long and weighs about 2 1/2 to 3 pounds.

Your body

Your ankles and feet may swell. Try lying down and putting your feet up. If your hands and face swell suddenly, call your health care provider.
You may get stretch marks on your belly and breasts as they get bigger.
You may have contractions. This is OK, but call your health care provider if you have more than five contractions in one hour.
As your belly gets bigger, it may get harder to keep your balance. This makes it easier to fall. Be careful!
You may have trouble sleeping because your baby moves a lot. Try sleeping on your side or with extra pillows.
You may also sweat more than usual.

Prenatal care guide

After the 28th week, visit your health care provider every two weeks for prenatal care.

Eat a variety of foods that are good for you. You should gain 1 pound a week this month.

Get plenty of rest--your body is working hard.

Start childbirth education classes if you haven't already done so.

Most health care providers do a blood test for gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) at 24 to 28 weeks.

Contact your provider if you have concerns about noticeable increases or decreases in your baby's movements.

Month 8

Your baby

Your baby is getting bigger. He can kick strongly and roll around. You may see the shape of his elbow or heel against your belly.

Your baby's fingernails have grown to the tips of his fingers.

Your baby's brain and lungs are still growing.

By the end of the eighth month, your baby is about 18 to 19 inches long and weighs about 4 to 5 pounds.

Your body

You may feel stronger contractions this month.

Colostrum may leak from your breasts. This is the fluid that comes out of your breasts before your breastmilk comes in. Wear breast pads in your bra to help with leaking.

You may have trouble breathing as the baby pushes on your lungs. Slow down and try to sit and stand up straight.

Your baby may crowd your stomach. Try eating four or five smaller meals during the day.

You should gain about one pound a week this month.

Prenatal care guide

Visit your health care provider every two weeks for prenatal care checkups. Call your health care provider right away if you have:

Bleeding or a gush of fluid from your vagina

Cramps, stomach pains or a dull backache

Blurry vision, or spots before your eyes

A feeling that the baby is pushing down

A noticeable increase or decrease in the baby's movements

More than five contractions in one hour

Month 9

Your baby

Your baby's lungs are ready to work on their own.

Your baby gains about 1/2 pound a week.

Your baby moves to a head-down position and rests lower in your belly. You will still feel your baby's movements.

By the end of the ninth month, your baby is 19 to 21 inches long and weighs 6 to 9 pounds.

Your body

Your belly button may stick out.

Your breathing should be easier once the baby moves down. But you may need to go to the bathroom more often because the baby is pressing on your bladder.

You may be uncomfortable because of the pressure and weight of the baby. Rest often.

Your feet and ankles may swell. Put your feet up. Try to stay in a cool place.

Your cervix opens up (dilates) and thins out (effaces) as it prepares for birth.

You may not gain any weight this month. You may even lose 1 or 2 pounds.

You will feel your baby move until you deliver.

Prenatal care guide

After the 36th week, visit your health care provider once a week for prenatal care checkups.
Contact your provider if you have concerns about noticeable increases or decreases in your baby's movements.
Decide if you are going to breastfeed or formula-feed your baby.
Time your contractions.

You are in labor if your contractions:

Are regular or evenly spaced apart (every seven minutes, for example)
Happen more than five times an hour
Last for 30 to 70 seconds
Get worse as you move around
Call your health care provider if you think you are in labor.

*This information can be found on the March of Dimes website
http://www.marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/yourbody_babygrowth.html