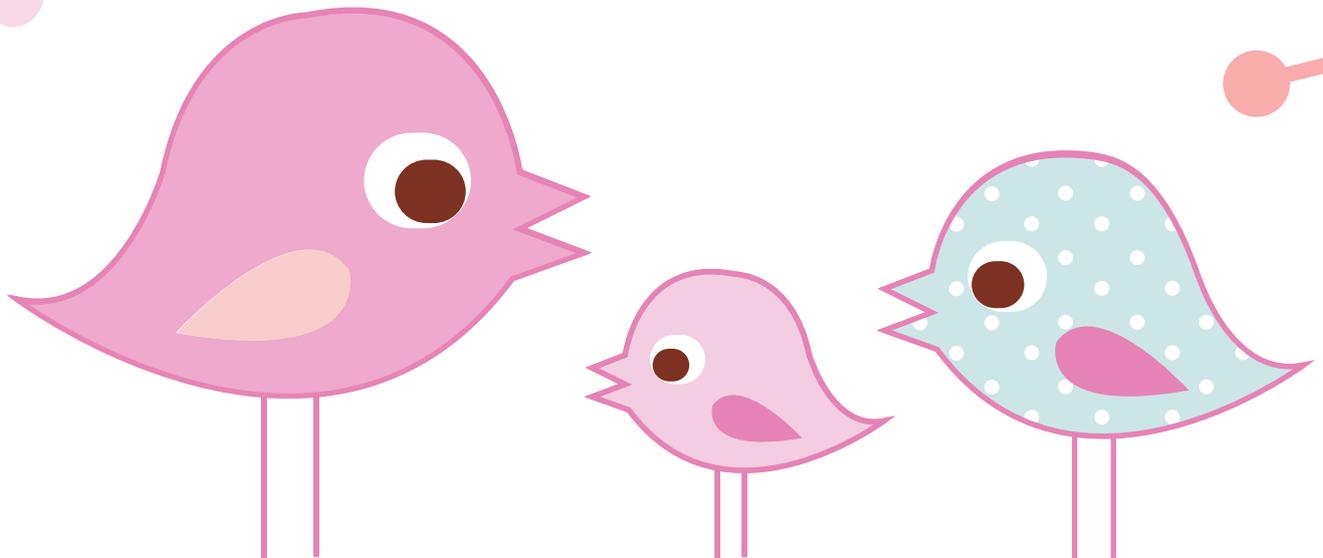


Your pregnancy - week by week



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Introduction

Welcome to your new best friend, the MummyPages pregnancy ebook! We'll be with you every step of the way as you embark on the most exciting and ultimately rewarding journey of your life.

There will undoubtedly be many highs and lows throughout your pregnancy, from feeling your baby move for the first time, to the morning sickness and heartburn that affects so many pregnant women. This guide to every week and key developmental milestone of your pregnancy will help you to be prepared for each stage of your new baby's growth, and ease any worries you may have.

Our guide will chart any physical or emotional changes you may be experiencing and illustrate the miracle of your unborn child's development explaining each pivotal stage in detail, with tips and advice for mums and dads.

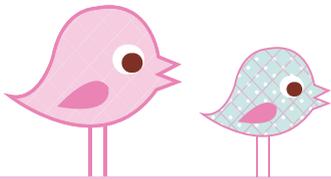
We hope you find our week by week guide helpful and we wish you good health and happiness as you get ready to welcome your bundle of joy into the world.

P.S. Don't forget, we'll be here for you throughout your little one's life to share the first bath, first tooth, first steps all the way up to his or her first kiss! Just log on to www.mummypages.ie day or night, for expert and community advice from Ireland's most popular online parenting resource.

Week 2

It's your second week of pregnancy. Most women are very surprised to learn that in their second week of pregnancy, they were not yet really pregnant. This seems strange, but it's true. Doctors typically use the starting date of your last menstrual cycle to calculate your due date once you know you are pregnant. It's known that conception will usually happen around two weeks after the beginning of your period - this is when most women ovulate. When the doctor calculates your due date, he starts with the first day of your last cycle and counts ahead 40 weeks. That time includes the days you were on your period and the time up until conception. So really, when you're 'two weeks pregnant', in medical terms, you may not even have conceived yet.

If you have conceived at this time, it more than likely happened just a day or so ago. Although some women claim that they know the very second they got pregnant, most women do not find out they are pregnant until after they have missed a menstrual cycle.



Your baby this week

Assuming that you have conceived, you're only a couple of days pregnant. So, what's going on with your baby at this very early stage?

Your egg has travelled down the fallopian tubes and united with a sperm. The sperm fertilised the egg and the result is called a zygote. A zygote is a single cell that is only about 1/100th inch in diameter. This cell contains your child's DNA which is made up of 23 of your chromosomes, and 23 of the father's chromosomes. The DNA will establish almost everything about your child; sex, hair colour, eye colour, body structure, skin type. The DNA also plays a role in determining a child's intelligence, personality, and even their future health.

During the first few days after conception, the zygote begins to divide and multiply. This happens very slowly at first – about once every 12 to 20 hours – but will soon be multiplying rapidly. While dividing and multiplying, the zygote begins to travel down through your fallopian tubes to find its way to the uterus where it will attach itself and begin to form into an embryo in the coming weeks.



Pregnancy Tip

Avoid caffeine. Although it's tough to give up that morning cup of coffee, it's best for you and your baby. It's believed that consuming caffeine can pose certain prenatal risks. Among other things, caffeine increases a baby's heart rate and limits the amount of nutrition that your body provides to your baby. Caffeine has even been associated with miscarriage when consumed in large quantities.

Your body this week

During the first two weeks of pregnancy, your body is in a state of preparation. This state of preparation occurs every month in all women - it's your menstrual cycle. Your body is producing estrogen and progesterone so that your ovaries can release an egg. This typically occurs two weeks after the first day of your period. Your uterus is also hard at work, building up an inner lining in preparation for a fertilised egg that will eventually attach itself to the lining and reside there for the next 40 weeks.

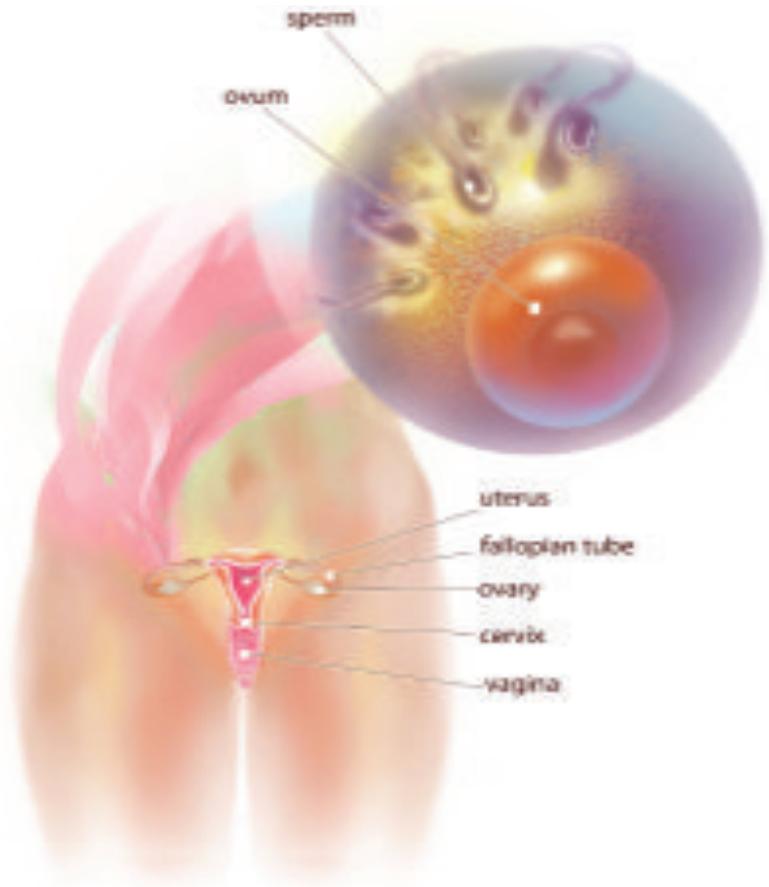
As for symptoms, some women say they have experienced pregnancy symptoms within only a few days of conceiving. There are also a few very lucky women who will go through the entire pregnancy without experiencing the more annoying symptoms like morning sickness. The typical woman, however, will not have any pregnancy symptoms at this early stage. Symptoms usually start to show up around the fourth week of pregnancy after the fertilised egg has attached itself to the lining of the uterus. It's at this time that you will probably feel more tired, experience some slight

nausea, and have trouble sleeping. Other symptoms like having tender breasts and the need to urinate more frequently will follow. For now, the only thing you may notice is some slight cramping and maybe some spotting when the fertilised egg is attaching itself to the uterus.

If you know you are pregnant, now is a good time to take a look at your diet and lifestyle. Eat healthily and start adding

calories to your daily intake.

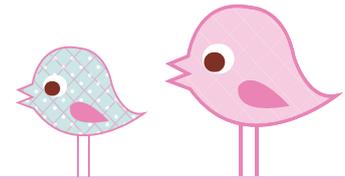
During these next 40 weeks, you should gain between 7 and 18 kilos (or roughly 1 and 3 stone). For most women this means a 2,200 calorie per day diet for the first 20 weeks of your pregnancy and 2,500 calories per day thereafter. A healthy lifestyle with minimal stress is essential to having a happy pregnancy and a healthy baby.



Week 3

It's your third week of pregnancy but you probably aren't even aware that you are pregnant yet. Symptoms usually do not occur this early and you have not yet missed a menstrual cycle. Nevertheless, your body is already going through some miraculous changes in preparation for your baby.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a poppy seed!

At this stage, your baby is just starting to become an embryo. Up until now, your baby was medically referred to as a zygote or a blastocyst. Sounds very scientific, but

is fascinating. A zygote is basically the fertilised egg, which contains an equal amount of DNA from each parent. The zygote is the single cell that begins to divide and multiply to become a blastocyst, which is a bigger cluster of cells that has an outer layer and an inner layer. The inner layer will become your baby, and the outer layer will become the placenta. It takes about six days for the blastocyst to make its way into your uterus. Once it gets to your uterus, the blastocyst will start to burrow down into the uterine lining where it will become an embryo.

After the blastocyst attaches to the uterus, three layers will begin to form. They are very tiny but they can be seen under a microscope. The layers are the ectoderm layer, which will become your baby's skin, hair, glands, and brain (among other things); the mesoderm layer, which will become your baby's bones, muscles, blood, and connective tissues; and the endoderm layer, which will become your baby's internal organs (heart, stomach, liver, lungs, etc.).



Pregnancy Tip

Now is a good time to scrutinise your diet and lifestyle. Avoid any bad habits like smoking and drinking alcohol, avoid empty calories and junk food, and eat a balanced diet that is high in protein and complex carbohydrates. Also, make sure you are getting enough fluids. Drink at least eight glasses of water per day to rid your body of unwanted toxins.

Your body this week

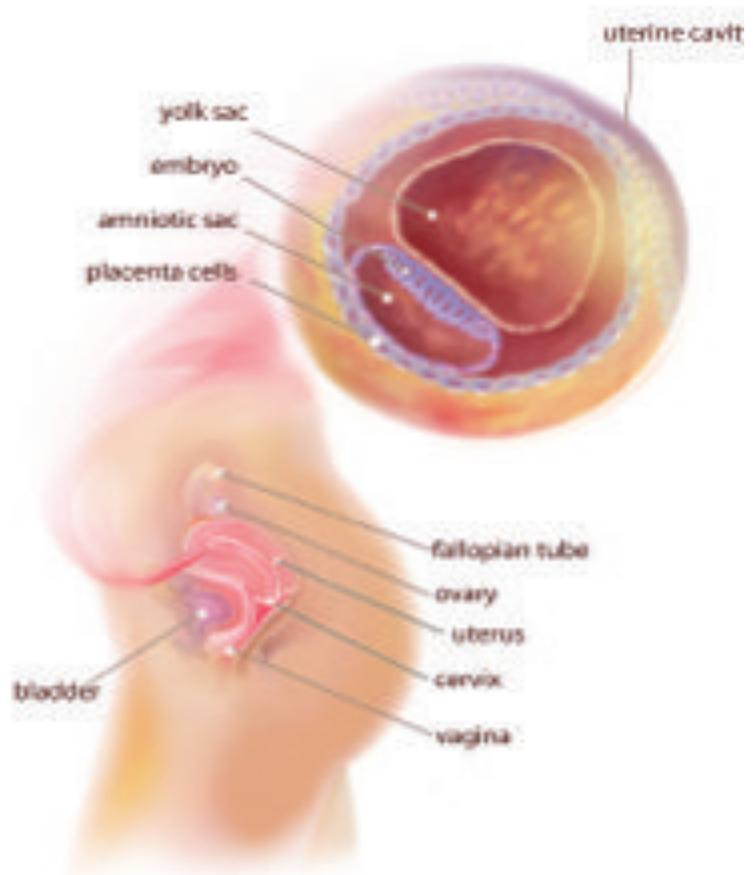
From the moment of conception, your body starts to change. Although at this early stage of pregnancy, you probably won't even be aware of the changes that are taking place within your body. In preparation to provide nourishment to your baby, your body is now producing higher levels of hormones. This increase of hormonal activity results in a several side effects that you will begin to experience in the coming weeks:

- One of the first effects of higher hormone levels is breast tenderness. Your breasts may become tender and extremely sensitive. They also may feel fuller and heavier. When this starts to happen, it's a good idea to wear a very supportive bra or a sports bra.
- Nausea is also a result of the higher levels of hormones. If you have not had nausea so far, count your blessings. This is the dreaded side effect of pregnancy. It's usually called 'morning sickness' because most women experience the nausea in the morning. For some, the nausea can last all day. Have patience. The bouts of nausea will usually start to

go away after the first trimester of pregnancy. Contact your doctor if you have bouts of nausea that are severe, you cannot keep foods down, you feel dizzy when you stand up, there is blood in your vomit, or if you are only passing a small amount of urine.

- Many women report that they feel extremely fatigued within the first few weeks of pregnancy. This too is a result of the increased hormone

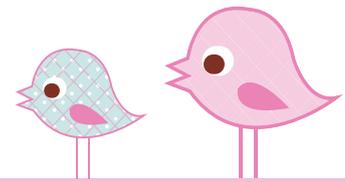
production. To prepare for the baby, your body is now using extra resources such as blood and nutrients. You may notice that your heart is beating faster and you get worn out quicker than usual. To combat this fatigue, make sure to get plenty of rest and include some light physical activity in your daily routine.



Week 4

Week 4 of your pregnancy means that you are now entering the embryonic period. This is a time when your baby will officially become an embryo and begin to develop. This is a critical time for your baby and a good time for you to start eating and living as healthily as you possibly can.

Your baby this week



Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a poppy seed! During week 4 of your pregnancy, your baby is about 1 millimetre long. The fertilised egg that was created at conception has now made its way to your uterus and is attaching to the inner lining where it is becoming an embryo. Once a single cell, your baby is now comprised of

hundreds of cells that are dividing and multiplying at a rapid pace. In this fourth week, your baby's organs are beginning to form and by week ten will be mostly developed.

The amniotic sac, which will house and protect your baby, is now present, as well as the yolk sac which will provide your baby with red blood cells and nutrients until the placenta takes over. The placenta, considered to be an organ, is a vascular structure that attaches to the uterine wall. Your baby is then attached to the placenta by the umbilical cord. Throughout your pregnancy, the placenta will serve as the baby's source of blood, oxygen, and nutrients. The placenta also receives waste from the baby and processes it through your body for disposal.

At this early stage of your pregnancy, your baby consists of three distinct types of cells; ectoderm, mesoderm, and endoderm. Ectoderm cells will form your baby's skin, mesoderm cells will become your baby's skeleton, and the endoderm cells will form the internal organs. Your baby's spinal cord and brain are also beginning to develop. Blood vessels and arteries have already started taking shape and your baby will soon have its own vascular system.



Pregnancy Tip

It's important to keep fit not only for the baby's health, but for your health and happiness during your pregnancy. Make sure that you include some sort of physical activity to your day. There are various exercises that are safe to do during pregnancy. Be sure to keep your doctor informed periodically about the type and duration of exercises you are doing. Once you get the okay, continue to enjoy your pregnancy workouts!

Your body this week

By now, you have probably missed your first menstrual cycle, taken a pregnancy test, and found out the good news. If you have not already started, now is the time to begin taking daily prenatal vitamins to ensure the health of you and your baby. Even if you are a healthy eater, you still need the extra folic acid and iron that prenatal vitamins provide. Folic acid has been shown to reduce the risk of certain birth defects that can develop early in a pregnancy. It's recommended that pregnant women take prenatal vitamins that contain at least 1mg of folic acid. The extra iron is needed because your body is now producing more blood to accommodate the development of your baby. The more blood, the more iron is needed to keep you from becoming anaemic. Iron also helps with the fatigue that accompanies pregnancy. It's recommended that during pregnancy, you should be getting at least 27mg of iron each day. That is twice the amount that your body needs when you are not pregnant.

Your symptoms during week 4 will be minimal and may even mimic the usual symptoms of your menstrual cycle; cramping,

fatigue, and nausea.

The cramping may feel like you are getting your period but is actually caused from the fertilised egg implanting itself in your uterus. Fatigue is the result of the increased blood that your body is now producing and nausea is believed to be caused by the extra hormones that are now produced. You may also notice that your breasts are feeling tender and are extremely sensitive, which is also a very normal symptom that occurs during a woman's normal menstrual cycle.



Week 5

Week 5 of your pregnancy is here! Your body and your baby are undergoing some dramatic changes. Last week, you may have had a few symptoms of pregnancy, like nausea and fatigue. This week, you could notice a new round of symptoms or, if you are lucky, your symptoms may go away completely!

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of an apple seed, or about 0.33cm (0.13 inches).

The shape of your baby now resembles a pear. The narrow pointed end will become your baby's spine and the larger rounded end is now developing into your baby's head. In fact,

the majority of growth your baby experiences in the fifth week will take place in the head. Your baby's brain is rapidly developing so that it can regulate its heart rate and blood circulation. This development is visibly noticeable when looking at a 5 week old embryo. The head seems very large and the remainder of the body resembles a tail. There are also small protrusions that will become your baby's arms and legs.

Major organs like the liver, kidney, stomach, and heart are forming as well as the digestive system, the nervous system and the circulatory system. The fifth week is a critical time for your baby's heart development. At this stage, the heart is starting to divide into separate individual chambers and is even pumping blood. Although the typical use of a stethoscope will not yet detect your baby's heartbeat, an internal ultrasound will sometimes detect it this early in the pregnancy.



Pregnancy Tip

Prevent morning sickness by frequently snacking on filling foods that are mild in flavour. Crackers are said to be a pregnant woman's best friend during the first trimester. Keep such snacks readily available and eat them before going to bed and even in the morning before you attempt to get out of bed. Simply having something in your stomach can stop nausea in its tracks.

Your body this week

The fifth week of pregnancy will sometimes bring on several new symptoms and increase the severity of the current symptoms. Your level of fatigue is likely to increase during week 5. This is probably due to the growth spurt that your baby is having right now. Any previous symptoms of nausea and tender breasts should be about the same as they were last week. However, because of the increased levels of estrogen and progesterone, this week could bring on a few new symptoms:

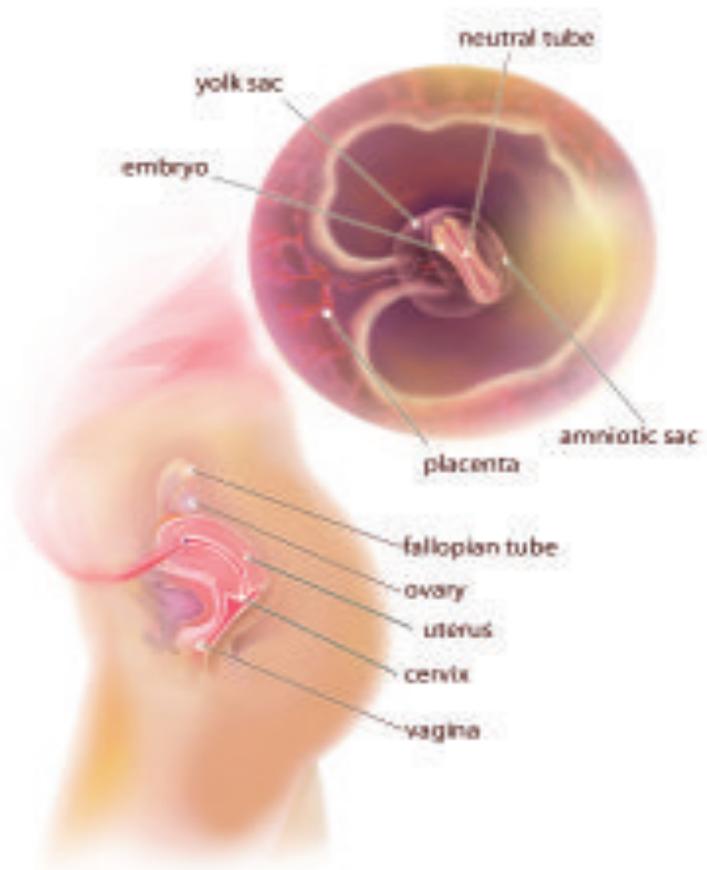
- Mood swings. You may find that you are happy and excited one minute and crying the next. Don't be overly concerned. This is normal. Your brain and body is trying to get used to its new level of hormones. Pregnancy is a very emotional time anyway, so when you factor in the hormonal changes, mood swings are to be expected.
- You may also notice that you have the need to urinate more frequently. This is due to your uterus being larger than usual and pressing against your bladder. Again, quite normal and to be expected.
- Some women experience heartburn early in their pregnancy because the hormone progesterone can

cause the valve between the stomach and the oesophagus to relax, allowing stomach acid to enter the oesophagus. Much later in a pregnancy, heartburn and indigestion is caused by the weight of the baby pushing on the stomach. Make sure to talk to your doctor before taking any over the counter medications for heartburn.

- Headaches are also common in early pregnancy. It's not fully understood why but it's assumed that they are due to

the higher levels of hormones as well. Again, make sure to talk to your doctor prior to taking over the counter medications for headaches.

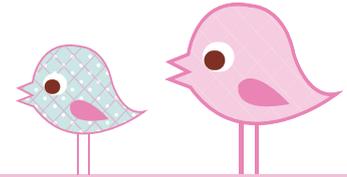
At the fifth week, you probably will not see any difference in your body in terms of weight gain or a protruding belly - the increased size of your uterus may be noticeable if you lay a certain way and it may feel a bit harder to the touch.



Week 6

Week 6 is a very exciting week for you and baby. Some critical milestones in your baby's development will happen this week. The baby's heartbeat will now be detectable and facial features are beginning to form. As for you, if you haven't experienced some of the more common side effects like nausea and tender breasts, you are likely to do so this week.

Your baby this week



Your sweet pea is now around the size of, well, a sweet pea or about 0.65cm (a quarter of an inch).

Your baby's brain continues to develop rapidly during your sixth week of pregnancy and the heartbeat is now visible during an ultrasound, though most women do not have their first ultrasound this early in the pregnancy.

Your baby's circulatory system is starting to work and is delivering blood to all parts of the embryo. Those little buds that recently formed are now beginning to move and resemble hands and feet. Facial features are also developing. Your baby's eyes, ears, nose, cheeks, and chin will soon be recognisable. For now, they look like dark spots. Even at this early stage in your pregnancy, your baby's voice box is already forming. A small groove called the laryngotracheal groove is now present, which is the beginning of the larynx, or voice box. The workings of the inner ear are also present. Amazingly, your baby will soon be able to hear from inside the womb!

Pregnancy Tip



Did you know that even at this early stage of pregnancy, your baby can feel your touch? This is because the central nervous system is developing and has already started to link your baby's muscles and limbs. Many experts believe that gently rubbing your belly is calming to your foetus and is a great start to bonding with your baby!

Your body this week

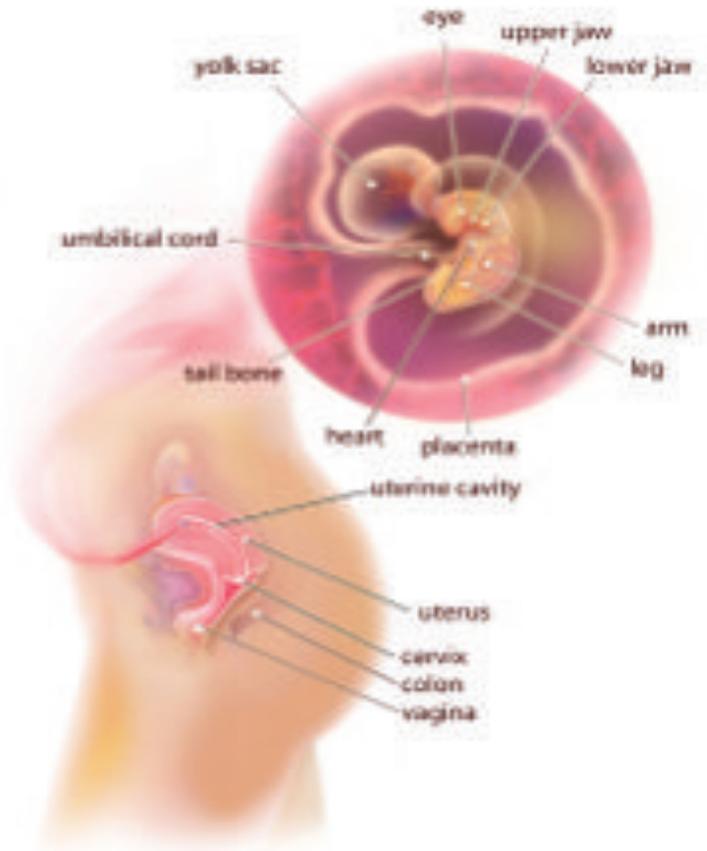
Your body will go through many changes during your pregnancy, but this week you may find that the changes are all taking place in your breasts. Approximately 90 percent of all pregnant women will experience changes in their breasts around the sixth week. You may start to notice that your breasts are increasingly tender. There may even be a tingling sensation and they could feel heavier and fuller than they usually do.

Additionally, your areola (the dark circle around the nipple of your breast) may begin to grow darker and larger. Although scientists are not completely sure why this happens, many believe that the new level of hormones and the higher volume of blood circulating in your body are the cause. There are also some who believe that the areola darkens to help a newborn baby, who has limited vision, find the breasts easier.

The typical pregnant woman will gain just over 2 kilos (5 pounds) during the first trimester. During this sixth week, you might notice a minimal amount of weight gain. Of course, this depends on the amount of

morning sickness you have had - some women actually lose weight during the first trimester when they are plagued with nausea. If you are having severe nausea or morning sickness you should discuss it with your doctor. There is a complication in pregnancy called hyperemesis gravidarum that is characterised by extreme nausea and vomiting so severe that a woman's body will become dehydrated and she will develop an electrolyte

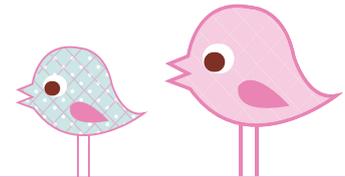
deficiency. This is a dangerous state for an unborn baby and normally requires hospitalisation in order to restore the fluids and electrolytes.



Week 7

Week 7 brings some fascinating changes for your little baby. Facial features are becoming more defined, little finger buds are forming, and your baby is starting to move and explore his or her temporary home. You may notice some minor changes in yourself this week, but overall, your symptoms will mimic last week's.

Your baby this week



Week 7 and your baby is now the size of a blueberry, which measures about 1.3 cm (1/2 inch). When your baby was first conceived, it took several days for the cells to begin dividing and multiplying and when they started, they were only multiplying very slowly. Now, in your 7th week of pregnancy, your baby's cells are multiplying at a rate that creates about 6,000 per hour! It's no wonder that your baby has doubled in size since last week.

At 7 weeks, the sex of your baby is still undetermined. Although the tissue that forms the genitals (the genital tubercle) is present now, it does not become recognisable until around week nine. Arms and legs that just last week were little buds, now have what looks to be the start of hands and feet! The same hands and feet you will soon be tickling and kissing! The eyes now have eyelids that are still forming, but visible. Small blood veins can now be seen through the skin, which is almost translucent at this point. The umbilical cord now has its own structure of blood vessels that deliver oxygen and nutrients from you to your baby. Red blood cells are being produced by the liver for now (this will stop once your baby has bone marrow which will then take over making red blood cells). The pancreas and intestines are also quickly developing. Even elbow joints are forming at this early stage in your pregnancy.

Even though your baby is only the size of a blueberry, he or she is very active now swimming around in the amniotic fluid and even kicking the little leg buds. You won't feel any movement yet, but you soon will!



Pregnancy Tip

If you have a cat, like to garden, or enjoy rare meat, take heed. A parasitic infection called Toxoplasmosis can be contracted from cat faeces and undercooked meat. Toxoplasmosis causes flu-like symptoms and for most is very minor. However, if contracted during pregnancy, the infection can be passed to your baby and can lead to extremely serious illnesses. It's recommended to not come in contact with litter boxes, to wear gloves if you are gardening and to only eat meats that are cooked right through.

Your body this week

At seven weeks into your pregnancy, your uterus is now twice as large as it was pre-pregnancy and your body now carries around 10 percent more blood than it did prior to becoming pregnant. This is just the beginning though. By the time you are ready to deliver, your uterus will be the size of a watermelon and your body will have about 45 percent more blood. The addition of blood flow and your growing uterus will both cause you to urinate more frequently now. In fact, as your pregnancy progresses, your need to urinate more often and the volume of urine you produce will increase.

If you are experiencing morning sickness, it will probably be sticking around for a while longer. Most women who have morning sickness find that once the first trimester is over, it goes away. So hang in there!

Prenatal care is vital to ensuring a healthy start for your baby and a healthy pregnancy for you. So, now is the time to make an appointment for your first prenatal visit, if you have not already done so. Your first prenatal visit is normally carried out by your obstetrician or hospital antenatal clinic around the 12th to 14th week of pregnancy, but this can vary greatly depending on your

chosen hospital or clinic. If you have not been through this before, you're probably wondering what will happen at the first appointment. The overall goal is to chart the progress of your pregnancy and give you information that will help you make good decisions throughout the pregnancy. The doctor or midwife will ask you some questions about your medical history and your lifestyle. Your height and weight will be recorded, as well as your blood pressure. The doctor will test your urine for protein levels (presence of protein in the urine could indicate the condition pre-eclampsia) and you will

also be asked to have a blood test. Your doctor or midwife may feel your tummy – this is done throughout pregnancy to check the baby is growing properly and as you get nearer your due date, to see what position your baby is in. If you are far enough along, your doctor or midwife may listen to the baby's heartbeat and take measurements of your uterus and baby.

The doctor will also answer any questions you have, so it's a good idea to jot them down when you think of them and take the list to each appointment.



Week 8

Week 8 is here! You're two months pregnant now and many wondrous things are happening inside your body. Your baby is doubling in size each week and developing unique features. Week 8 will also bring about some changes to your body and perhaps, a few new symptoms as well.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a raspberry, or about 1.6cm (0.6 of an inch), and weighs in at a cool 1 gramme (0.04oz).

Week 8 brings some exciting changes for your baby. Your baby's facial features are now becoming even more defined

as the lips, the nostrils, the tip of the nose and the tongue all take shape. The ears are starting to form from folds of skin, and your baby's nipples are now present. Even at this very early stage in your pregnancy, your baby already has the start of what will become the twenty baby teeth!

One of the biggest milestones that your baby will reach this 8th week is called ossification. This means that the bones that are present, such as the spine, pelvic, legs, arms, and skull, are starting the process of hardening during growth. This process will continue as your baby develops new bones throughout your pregnancy. In fact, the process of ossification actually continues until your child is grown.

Muscles are now growing in the back and along the spine and it's only about a week away until your baby's reproductive organs will become either testes or ovaries. Elbow and knee joints are now present and the arm and legs are growing longer. Toes and fingers are forming but will remain webbed for some time. Both sides of the brain are developing rapidly in the 8th week of pregnancy creating up to a quarter of a million new neurons per minute. This rapid development of the brain allows critical reflexes and movement to occur at this time.



Pregnancy Tip

Many women struggle with telling their boss that they are pregnant. Should you tell them now or wait a while? The answer depends on you and what you do in your job. If you are having any complications in your pregnancy, it may be best to let the boss know early on. This way, they will be more likely to understand time away from work for doctor's appointments. And, if your job involves any risks, such as exposure to chemicals, lifting heavy objects, or lots of stress, you must inform your boss right away to protect your health and the health of your baby.

Your body this week

Your 8th week of pregnancy is all about breast changes - at least this is the thing you will probably notice most this week. You may find that the veins in your breasts are more visible through the skin now, and your areolas are getting darker in colour. Your bras may also be feeling a bit tighter than they did a few weeks ago. This is due to the added hormones that your body is producing. These hormones cause your breasts to grow larger and feel heavier. This growth will continue throughout your pregnancy. It is not uncommon to gain a couple of cup sizes during your pregnancy.

Changes to your breasts are happening in preparation for breast feeding. At 8 weeks, you may only notice a slight increase in size and a fuller feeling, but many women report itching as the skin starts to stretch, and the occurrence of Montgomery tubercles, or those little bumps on the areolas that produce oil. They are actually glands and are thought to secrete oils during pregnancy and while breast feeding which will prohibit bacterial growth on the nipples, and will keep the skin of the nipple pliable. To lessen the discomfort of breast changes during your pregnancy, make sure to wear very supportive

bras that are made of material that is not irritating.

As the nipples are so tender during pregnancy, make sure that your bras do not have seams across the nipple area. There are several maternity bras on the market including bras made especially for sleeping and exercising. Since you will no doubt gain cup size and circumference over the next few months, you may want to purchase bras that will give you some room to grow. Select bras that fit well when they are on the tightest clasp, and are made

of material that is supportive but yet has some stretch.

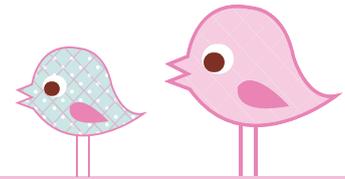
Depending on your location in the country, your chosen hospital and your pregnancy care choices, you'll have an early booking appointment (which can include a scan) anywhere between now and 14 weeks into your pregnancy. You may also have a further scan around 20 weeks in. Depending on how your pregnancy progresses, you can expect to be meeting your doctor or nurse on an increasingly regular basis for the next 6 or 7 months.



Week 9

Can you believe that it's already week 9 of your pregnancy? This week your baby officially becomes a foetus and will undergo some dramatic changes, including the loss of the embryonic tail. Your body will also undergo some noticeable changes as your breasts begin to change in preparation to feed your baby.

Your baby this week



Week 9 and – again this week – your baby has doubled in size. This week, your baby is similar in size to an olive and measures about 2.3cm (nearly an inch) and weight has also doubled and is now around 2 grammes.

The exciting news for this week is that your baby is now officially called a 'foetus' instead of an embryo.

This change in status is due to the disappearance of the embryonic tail. Up until now, your baby had a tail extending from the spine. This protruding tail, which is the lower spine, has now become enveloped with muscles, buttocks, and legs giving your baby have a more human-like appearance.

The physical changes from the 7th to the 8th week are spectacular! All organs and body parts are now present in various stages of development. Your baby's heart has now fully divided into four separate chambers and the heart valves are developing. In addition to the organ and muscle development that has been occurring for the last couple of weeks, your baby now has nerves that are functioning. The eyes are completely formed now with eyelids that will remain fused for several weeks. The placenta is now performing most of the job of producing hormones. Fingers and toes are now more pronounced, and the shape of the head is looking more like a little baby's head. All major joint, shoulders, elbows, wrists, ankles, and knees are working. Even earlobes are present at this early stage in your pregnancy.

Pregnancy Tip



Fatigue is common, especially in the first trimester of pregnancy. Your body is working harder now and at times you are left with no energy. Although you may be tempted to have a coffee or an energy drink to get you through the afternoon, you could actually be doing yourself and your baby more harm than good. An overload of caffeine can be harmful to your baby, and the temporary energy burst from energy drinks will only leave you feeling more exhausted in the end. Instead, snack on foods that are high in protein and iron. Cheese, milk, eggs, lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, and nuts are all good protein choices. And, to up your iron stores, try spinach, soy products, lean red meat, dried fruits, and iron fortified cereals.

Your body this week

In week 9 of your pregnancy, your uterus is now about the size of a small melon. You are probably starting to feel bloating and some fatigue this week. There could be a small amount of weight gain now, but it is more than likely just water retention at this point.

During your pregnancy, your weight can fluctuate on a daily basis by as much as a half to one kilo (about 1 to 2 pounds). Therefore, it's probably not a good idea to weigh yourself every day as you could get frustrated and worried when you have lost a pound or so. If you do want to monitor your weight, get on the scale only once per week at the same time of day, and with an empty bladder. This will give you a truer indication of your weight gain.

By the time you give birth, you will have gained an average of 8 to 16 kilos (about 18 to 35 pounds). This seems like a lot to gain, but when you consider what is going on in your body, it is not. Your uterus will weigh about 1 kilo (2 pounds) total, and the placenta or afterbirth normally weighs about 0.6 kilo (1.5 pounds). Because your breast tissue grows in preparation

to feed your baby, the added weight is usually around 1 kilo (2 pounds). The added amount of blood in your body during pregnancy can weigh as much as 1.8 kilos (4 pounds). The fat that is stored during pregnancy averages around 3.1 kilos (7 pounds). Factor in the size of the baby, and it all adds up. Of course these numbers are based on an average healthy pregnancy in an average sized woman. You may gain more or less. As long as your doctor tells you that your weight gain is appropriate, you should have nothing to worry about.



Week 10

It's week 10 and that means you are now one-quarter through your pregnancy! During this 10th week, you will probably notice some new symptoms as well as continue to deal with some of the more familiar symptoms. Also, week 10 is a special week for your baby as the gender of your baby will finally be determined.

Your baby this week



Week 10 of your pregnancy and your baby is now about 3 cm (1.2 inches) long and weighs about 4 grammes. This is roughly the size of a prune. Just think: last week your baby only weighed about 2 grammes. In seven days, your baby has again doubled in size!

This week, your baby will either become a boy or a girl. The genital tubercle (the tissue that forms into your baby's reproductive organs) becomes recognisable. In a female foetus, the clitoris will appear and the ovaries will descend. In a male foetus, the testes appear and start producing the hormone testosterone.

Your baby's fingers are now completely separated and tiny fingernails are starting to appear. The eyes, which were slightly off to the side of the head, have now moved to the front of the face. The palate and the roof of the mouth are now formed and taste buds are starting to form on the tongue. Neck muscles are now developed – so your baby can move his or her head back and forth – and the lungs have now begun to form from tubes called bronchioles.

Your baby is now extremely active inside your womb: arms are waving, legs are kicking, and your baby can even roll over now! You probably cannot feel anything yet, but during this 10th week of pregnancy, your uterus is a big playground for your baby to explore.



Pregnancy Tip

Acne during pregnancy is normal and to be expected, but you have to be extra cautious when using acne medications during pregnancy. Do not use any oral or topical acne medication until you clear it with your doctor. There are some topical solutions that are safe to use; however, many of today's acne products can be harmful to your unborn baby. Oral acne medications are not to be taken when pregnant. Most of them contain tetracycline and oral isotretinoin which are known to cause birth defects. Additionally, the harmful ingredients found in topical acne treatments can be absorbed through the skin presenting risks of birth defects to your developing baby.

Your body this week

During this 10th week of your pregnancy, the amount of blood in your body will begin to increase significantly. By the time you deliver your baby, your blood level will be about 40 to 50 percent higher than pre-pregnancy levels. For now, this increase in blood will make your veins in your breasts, stomach, and legs more noticeable through your skin. Nausea and fatigue are still ongoing in your 10th week of pregnancy, but you may also notice changes in your complexion, weight and even your gums.

- **Complexion** – The increased hormones wreak havoc on some women's complexion. You could find that your skin is now blotchy looking or that you have suddenly developed acne as if you were a teenager again!
- **Weight** – Your waist may begin to disappear now. Most women will start to notice weight gain around this time. If you are of average weight, you should expect to gain a between 7 and 18 kg (1 to 3 stone) during your pregnancy.
- **Moodiness** – Unfortunately, with the increased level of hormones racing around in your body, you will most likely experience some moodiness. Just take a deep breath



and remember that this too shall pass!

- **Softening of the gums** – This is a rather odd symptom of pregnancy. Hormonal changes can cause your gums to swell and become inflamed. It's believed that this happens in response to any bacteria that may be harboured along the gum line. It's just another way that your body alerts you to anything that can harm your baby. If you notice your gums are swollen and inflamed, contact your dentist. A cleaning may be all that is needed.

Week 11

Week 11 brings exciting changes for you and your baby. The good news for your baby is that the danger zone of the pregnancy is now passed, lessening the likelihood of miscarriage. You may notice some minor physical changes in week 11, but even more exciting is the realisation that the end of morning sickness is in sight!

Your baby this week



At week 11, your baby has now grown to about the size of a lime and measures close to 4 cm (1.6 inches) in length. Weight gain has again almost doubled since last week. Now your baby weighs about 7 grams (1/4 oz). From this point on, your baby's growth will be rapid. In fact, over the next three weeks, your baby will double in size.

The notable milestone for week 11 is that now your baby has more than likely passed the critical zone when most congenital complications occur and miscarriage is now less likely to happen. Other significant developments for week 11 include the emergence of your baby's genitals from inside the body, hair follicles on the skin starting to form, fingernails becoming visible, the eyes' irises developing, and the teeth buds forming into teeth inside the gums. Your baby's ears have now moved up to the side of the head and soon, your baby will be able to hear you talking!

All of the internal organs are now larger and functioning much more efficiently than they did last week. The placenta is now fully developed and is providing your baby with all the nutrients and oxygen that is needed. And, your baby can now swallow amniotic fluid and then urinate it out into the amniotic sac. Don't be concerned by this thought. The amniotic fluid is constantly filtered and replaced by your body to remove toxins. Your baby's diaphragm is also developing now, which means that your baby could even have the hiccups! You probably won't feel them yet, but it is very common for a baby's mum to feel the baby's hiccups as the pregnancy progresses.



Pregnancy Tip

As you end the first trimester of your pregnancy, you may notice that your sex drive is coming back. In fact, it may even be stronger now than ever. Many first-time pregnant couples are concerned that having sex is dangerous to their unborn baby – this is not the case. As long as there are no complications to your pregnancy and you are comfortable having sex, there are no risks to the baby at all.

Your body this week

In week 11 you will start to see some slight physical changes taking place. There still may not be much weight gain, but you may start to notice the bump in your abdomen. Your uterus is now large enough to fill the space in your pelvis and is beginning to protrude over the pelvic bone. Many women say that they can feel the baby's movements at this time, but it's unlikely for most. Given the changes going on in your abdomen, gas and other intestinal movements will feel different than they normally do (they can almost feel like a fluttering which many women mistake for baby's movements). However, don't worry! It won't be long until you can feel every movement your baby makes.

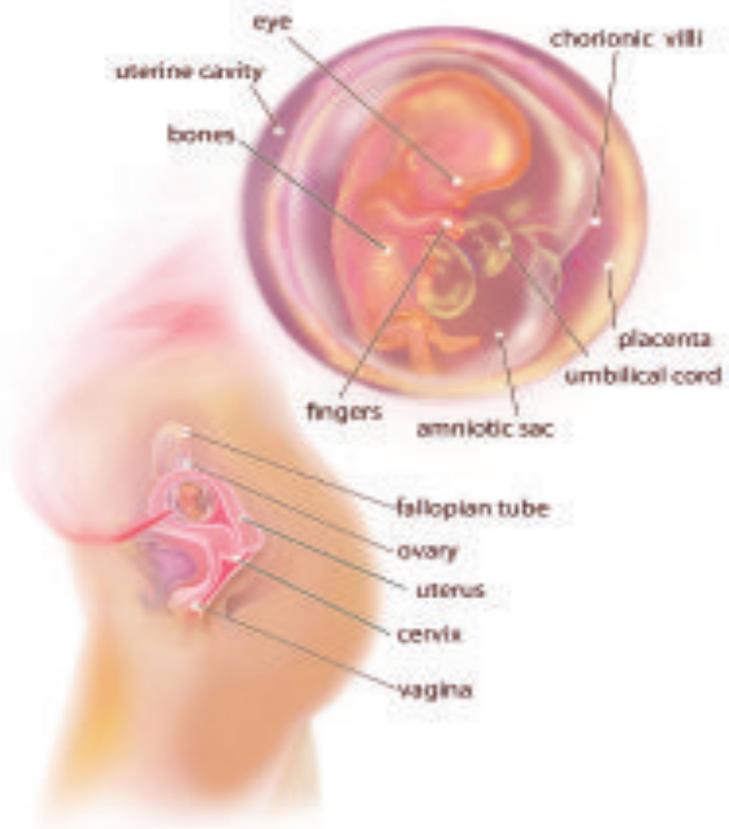
Your skin may be noticeably different now; either dry and itchy, or more oily than usual. You might also notice that your hair, fingernails, and toenails have changed in texture and growth. These changes are normal and are due to the added hormones in your body. Additionally, you may notice that you feel warmer than usual. This happens

because your body now has so much extra blood pumping through it.

You may also notice that a dark vertical line has started forming on your abdomen. This is called the Linea Negra and happens in about 75% of all pregnancies. The line travels from your pelvic bone up your abdomen and can go all the way to your belly button. It's believed that this line is caused by the increased production of estrogen, which

causes an increase in the production of pigment melanin. This increase in pigment is also the cause of skin discolorations during pregnancy.

As for morning sickness, if you have experienced it up till now, you will be happy to know that most women start to feel better around the 11th or 12th week of their pregnancies. In fact, many of the early symptoms of pregnancy start to calm down around this time.



Week 12

Week 12 is here and that means that you are almost a third of the way through your pregnancy. For many women, this is a turning point. The nausea may be over with now, the critical time for your baby is passed, and you begin to have more energy and just feel better.

Your baby this week



It's week 12 and your baby is now just about the size of a plum, and measures around 5.3cm (2.1 inches) in length. The weight has double from last week and now your baby weighs in at around 14 grammes (1/2 oz).

During week 12, your baby begins to develop reflexes and will move in response to stimulation. You probably won't notice the movement, but when you rub your abdomen, your baby knows it. Amazingly, your baby can now suck on his thumb and even scratch his nose! Fingers and toes curl and muscles in the face start to work, allowing your baby to make sucking movements and even clench his eyes tight. The intestines are developing rapidly at this time. In fact, they are growing so fast that they protrude into the umbilical cord (they will move into the abdomen soon). And, your baby is even practicing the process of digestion by using the muscles in the intestines in preparation to eat that first meal!

Your baby's face now looks perfect. All the features are there and in the right places. The mouth opens and closes, the nose is formed, ears are located in the proper position, and even the eyebrows are forming.

Week 12 is the beginning of a critical time of brain development. There are two phases during a pregnancy where the baby's brain goes through this rapid development; between 12 and 18 weeks and again between 24 and 36 weeks. During this time, it's especially important that you avoid being exposed to anything that could alter this development. Alcohol, tobacco, chemicals, even stress can alter the growth that is taking place inside your baby's developing brain.



Pregnancy Tip

Getting a good night's sleep is one of the most important things you can do during your pregnancy. But, sometimes that's easier said than done.

It's recommended that you try to sleep on your side so the added weight of your abdomen does not rest on your spine. The use of a body pillow can help make sleep positions easier to find.

Your body this week

Week 12 of pregnancy is certainly a turning point for many women. The critical time of your developing foetus is now passed, dramatically reducing the chance that something could go wrong, and you are feeling better. Many women begin to tell others that they are expecting around this time.

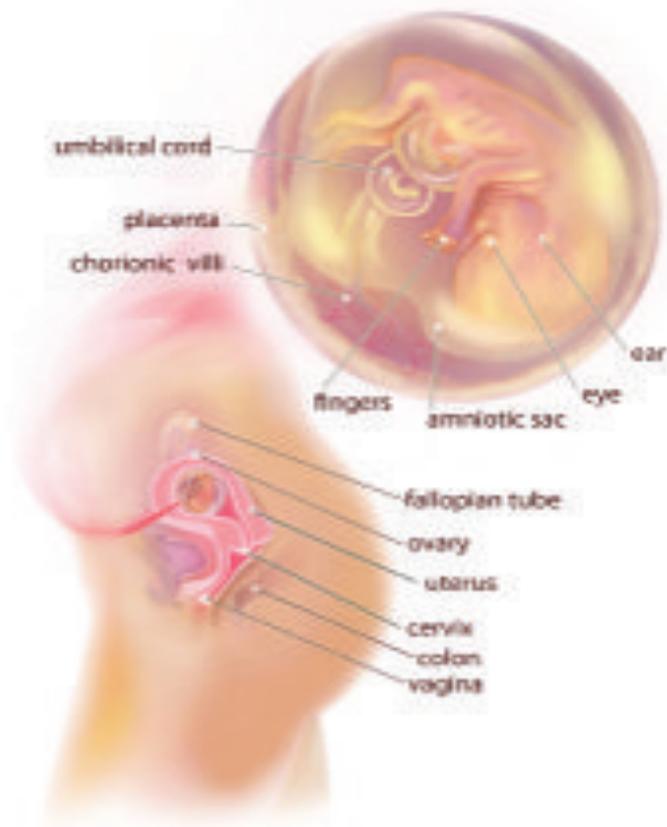
You'll have had your first prenatal visit around now, or soon. If you haven't had it or don't have one in the diary, you need to schedule the appointment right away. Prenatal care is essential to a healthy and happy pregnancy. You are probably gaining more energy now that the morning sickness is subsiding and your appetite is back. So, don't be surprised if you start to have those pregnancy cravings you've heard about! If you continue to have morning sickness, try not to worry about it. Many women unfortunately will feel some degree of nausea throughout their pregnancy. Just make sure that you tell your obstetrician about it.

Your body is more than likely starting to retain some water now and you may feel a bit

more bloated this week. If you are tracking your weight, which you should, you will probably notice that you have gained a couple of pounds now.

The increased estrogen and progesterone in your body may also bring changes to your facial skin. You could start to see patches of dark pigmentation on your cheeks, nose, upper lip, or forehead, or your existing freckles may look darker than usual. Don't be alarmed. This is normal and is

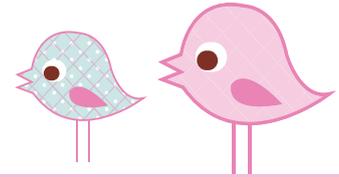
not dangerous. It's called Melasma or Mask of Pregnancy and mainly affects women with light brown skin who are exposed to intense sunlight. To lessen this cosmetic discoloration, make sure to use a good sun block on a regular basis.



Week 13

Week 13 is here and new developments are taking place with your baby and you. You more than likely are starting to feel much better and your energy level has greatly increased along with your appetite. Your body is changing though and you may find that your clothes are tighter this week.

Your baby this week



At week 13, your baby is now the size of a peach, and measures about 7.3cm (2.9 inches) long. Rapid weight gain has occurred since last week and now your baby weighs in at 23 grammes (0.8oz). That's almost double the weight of last week.

Some of the finer details are now developing in your baby.

At week 13, those tiny fingers now have their very own fingerprints. If your baby is a girl, the ovaries are fully developed and already have a few million eggs in them. Also, the tiny pancreas is already working, producing insulin which will regulate your baby's blood sugar. The growth of your baby's head has been rapid up until this point. At week 13, this growth begins to noticeably slow down. Up until now, your baby's head made up about half of the full length of the body. From now until around the 21st week of your pregnancy, the body starts to catch up with the rapid head growth. By week 21, the head will be about 1/3 of the full length of your baby.

Your baby's face is still changing a bit and becoming more refined. The eyes continue to get a little closer together each week and the ears are still moving into their proper position. Even so, if you were to see your baby's face at this point, it looks very normal.

Your baby's intestines, which have recently grown so fast that they are partially contained within the umbilical cord, are now beginning to migrate into the abdomen where they will take their place.



Pregnancy Tip

Omega-3 fatty acids, which are mainly found in fish, are an important part of a healthy diet for you and your developing baby. Yet, many women tend to avoid eating fish when they are pregnant because they are worried about consuming mercury. However, the benefits of Omega-3 fatty acids far outweigh the risks of mercury ingestion. It is recommended that pregnant women eat 170 to 340 grammes (6 to 12 ounces) of fish per week to get the fatty acids necessary for baby's proper brain development.

Your body this week

Week 13 is a time when most women find that their clothes are just a little too tight for comfort. It's not exactly time to run out and purchase a bunch of maternity clothes yet, but a stretchy pair of sweat pants are definitely more comfortable than a pair of jeans at this point. You probably don't want to spend a lot of money on clothes that fit right now because you just won't get to wear them very long. The need for true maternity clothes is just around the corner!

As your weight increases, you may also start to notice stretch marks appearing on your abdomen, waistline, buttocks, and breasts. For most women, stretch marks are unavoidable. Many claim that you can reduce the skin damage of stretch marks during your pregnancy by using topical solutions such as vitamin E oil. It's also known that staying well hydrated will cut down the amount and degree of stretch marks. So, make sure to drink plenty of fluids and discuss using a topical solution with your doctor.

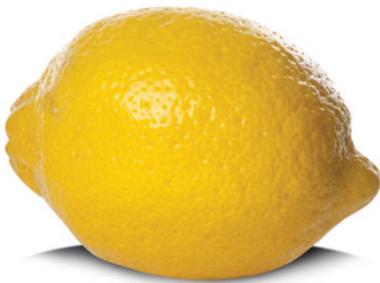
Bladder infections are a common occurrence during pregnancy and many women will experience them around this time. To prevent bladder infections, drink lots of fluids and do not hold your urine. Holding your urine is known to allow bacteria to grow. If you do suspect that you have a bladder infection, talk to your doctor before you try to use any over the counter remedies.



Week 14

It's hard to believe that it's already 14 weeks into your pregnancy! The first trimester is over and you are heading into the second which is a very exciting time for both you and your baby. The second trimester brings some major changes to your body and, soon, you will feel your baby move!

Your baby this week



At week 14 of your pregnancy, your baby is now around the size of a lemon, or about 8.6cm (3.4 inches) long. Your baby's weight has again almost doubled since last week and is around 42 grammes (1.5oz). As for this week's developments, your baby can now make facial expressions! The muscles in the

face are now receive impulses from the brain and your baby is practicing how to squint, frown, grimace, and even smile. Your baby's kidneys continue to produce urine as he swallows amniotic fluid and processes it through his body.

Your baby's head growth has now slowed down, allowing the body to catch up. The arms are now more proportionate to the body and the legs are getting there (although leg growth is still a bit slower at this stage). Your baby's neck muscles are now more pronounced and are actively turning the head back and forth and up and down. Additionally, there is a fine covering of hair all over baby's body and face. This is called lanugo and is there to help regulate the baby's body temperature. The lanugo hair usually falls off before birth when fat is developed and takes over the process of regulating the body temperature. Sometimes though, the lanugo hair is still present at birth and will fall off shortly afterwards. Amazingly, when the lanugo hair begins to fall off in the womb, it is ingested by the baby and is stored in the intestines along with cells from the amniotic fluid. These intestinal deposits are what make the baby produce their first bowel movement after birth, known as meconium.

Your baby's movements are now more fluid than they previously were. When a foetus first begins to move, the movements are quick and almost jerking type movements. Now, that your baby has had some practice using nerves and muscles to react to their brain impulses, the movements are much more intentional, smooth and coordinated.



Pregnancy Tip

An embarrassing side effect of pregnancy is flatulence. Why is gas so bad during pregnancy? Well, the hormones make your muscles relax. This slows your digestion, which is good for your baby but can cause gas for you. You cannot eliminate it, but you can minimise it by eating smaller meals that will not overload the digestive tract and avoiding foods that cause gas.

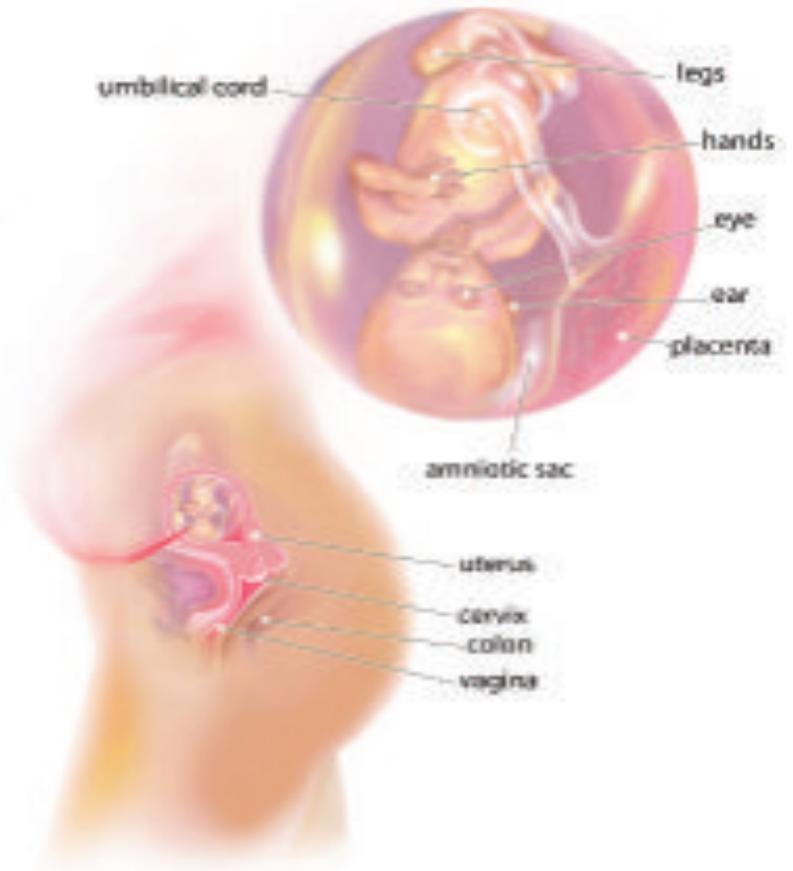
Your body this week

As you enter your second trimester of pregnancy, you may find that your breasts are not as tender or sore as they were previously. If you are still experiencing nausea, it's likely that the severity has decreased or if you are lucky, the morning sickness has now completely gone away.

You might notice that you do not have to urinate quite as much as you did last week. During the second trimester, bladder pressure is lessened causing you not to feel that constant need to go to the bathroom. Enjoy this while you can because it comes back in the third trimester.

A new symptom that could appear this week is nasal congestion. Most women do not even relate a stuffy nose to their pregnancy, but the added hormones in your body are the cause. Blood flow is increased to all areas of your body, including your nose. This increase in blood flow causes the mucous membranes in the nose to swell making your nose feel stuffy. Using a room humidifier can help alleviate this annoying symptom.

You could also find that you are experiencing some achy pains to your lower abdomen. Do not be alarmed. These pains are usually caused by the stretching of ligaments as your uterus grows. The doctor will call it 'round ligament pain'. There are several bands of ligaments that support your uterus during pregnancy. They are located at the side of the abdomen and run from the groin area to the upper hip, along the same line that a high-cut bikini would lay.

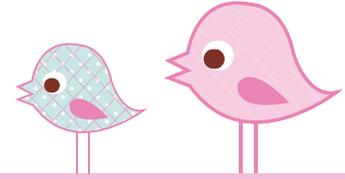


As the uterus grows, these bands stretch to accommodate the size and weight. If you do experience these pains, mention them to your doctor for reassurance. The doctor will usually tell you to put your feet up and rest to relieve the pains.

Week 15

Well, it's now week 15 and your baby is quickly making his or her presence known. You are slowly gaining weight now and will start to think about buying those cute maternity clothes. The milestone for your baby this week is that he or she is practicing to breathe!

Your baby this week



At week 15, your baby has now grown to the size of a naval orange, or about 10cm (4 inches) long. Last week, your baby weighed about 42 grammes (1.5oz). This week, your baby's weight has again nearly doubled and is about 70 grammes (2.5oz).

A remarkable development by week 15 is that your baby is practicing how to breathe. Those tiny lungs are not fully developed yet, but the muscles that control breathing are. Therefore, your baby is already using these muscles to inhale and exhale small amounts of amniotic fluid.

More of your baby's bones are hardening now and if you were to have an x-ray, you would be able to see what looks like a mostly complete skeleton. Your baby's neck is now strong and able to hold the large head up more, giving the appearance of a longer body. The pattern of hair on your baby's scalp is even developing already. Elbows and knees are bending more freely this week and arms and legs continue to grow longer and stronger. This means it won't be long until you feel that first punch or kick!

Internal organs continue to function more efficiently each week. Your baby's tiny heart is now pumping about 25 litres of blood each day through his amazing circulatory system. This amount increases throughout your pregnancy and will be an impressive 200 litres per day by the time your baby is born.



Pregnancy Tip

Back aches are common during pregnancy but did you know that your shoes can also give you a backache? High heels as well as flip-flops can cause problems. When you consider the weight gain, wearing high heels or shoes with no support like flip-flops, it's enough to put back out of commission. You may want to store those stilettos away until after your pregnancy. Your back will thank you!

Your body this week

At week 15, you are probably very excited to see that your profile is changing. Most women will have gained anywhere from 2 to 5 kilos (5 to 10 pounds) by this time and their once flat belly will now be sticking out. It's more than likely the only time in a woman's life that she is pleased at the idea of gaining weight! If you have not gained as much weight as you think you should, talk to your doctor about it. At this early stage of your pregnancy, it's probably not anything to worry about though. It could be that you have had more nausea and your appetite is just not what it should be yet. Once you get to feeling better, you can bet that you will have a ferocious appetite.

As your uterus continues to grow and rise above your hipbones, the doctor will be able to start measuring the growth which should closely coincide with your gestation (i.e., 20 weeks should be about 20 cm long). The doctor will start by feeling around for the top of the uterus (also called the fundus) just below your navel and down to the pelvic bone. Many women mistake this measurement as a measure of the baby. While this fundal height measurement gives the doctor and indication of the baby's size, it is not an actual measurement of the baby.

True measurements of your baby will happen when you have your first ultrasound which normally occurs between 18 to 21 weeks into your pregnancy.

A new symptom that may occur around week 15 is varicose veins. Most women believe that they are caused by the added weight of being pregnant but that's just half the cause. Varicose veins form because the circulatory system is working overtime to pump the increased amount of blood through your body. Occasionally, this extra amount of blood causes a vein wall to stretch or the valve of

the vein not to close properly. This causes blood to pool in an area of the vein, causing the vein to enlarge and become irregular shaped.

Although the varicose veins will usually go away after delivery, they can be uncomfortable during your pregnancy. To ease the discomfort, rest with your legs elevated higher than your heart, try not to cross your legs when you sit, avoid situations where you have to stand for long periods of time, and take daily walks to get the blood flowing.



Week 16

It's week 16 and about time for your second prenatal visit. Your baby continues to grow at a rapid pace and so does your tummy. You may want to pay close attention to what you are feeling this week. For many women, week 16 is the time that they will first feel their baby move!

Your baby this week



At week 16, your baby is now around the size of an avocado, or about 11.5cm (4.5 inches) and weighs in around 100 grammes (3.5oz). This is an incredible amount of growth for such a short period of time!

Your baby's genitals are now visible on ultrasound, so if you were to have an ultrasound at this stage you would definitely know the gender. Your baby's facial features are now becoming even more defined as eyebrows, eyelashes, and hair start to come in. His taste buds are also more defined now. In fact, some studies suggest that a baby this young can actually taste the amniotic fluid which will take on flavours of the mum's diet.

Your baby has all ten fingernails and all ten toenails at this point. They are also growing. In fact, it is very common for a baby to be born with long fingernails and toenails that have to be trimmed right away. Your baby's bladder is also functioning now on a regular basis, filling and emptying about every 40 to 45 minutes.

An interesting development of week 16 is happening in the ears. In order for your baby to hear, there are three tiny bones that must develop inside the ear. Additionally, the part of the brain that controls auditory function must be developed. Although your baby at 15 weeks is developing the ear bones, the brain function will not kick in for a while yet.

Although some experts believe that a muffled type of hearing starts at this early stage, it is when the auditory brain functions begin that the hearing changes and becomes more like what we understand hearing to be. Nevertheless, if you ask several experienced mums they will tell you that they have felt their baby's jump in reaction to a loud sound around this time.



Pregnancy Tip

As the weight comes on, and the symptoms increase, you need to plan your days accordingly. Do not let yourself get so busy that there is no time left in the day for you to relax. During pregnancy, relaxing is almost as important as eating properly. Make sure that you balance busy time with time just for you. Relax, read a book, listen to music; anything that gets you to breathe deep and give your body a break.

Your body this week

A long anticipated event in your pregnancy is feeling your baby move for the first time. Now that you are 16 weeks pregnant and your baby is large enough that his movements can be felt, you are finally at the point where it can happen. Sometimes, mums don't feel the movement until they are closer to 20 weeks of pregnancy. This is common for first pregnancies. Many times, a woman might think they are having gas or just intestinal movements when it is the baby moving. Experienced mums are likely to detect the movements early on and can discern them from gas or intestinal movement. These first movements are sometimes called 'quickening'. They are also known as bubbles, butterflies, and flutters.

A test that you may be offered at this time is called an amniocentesis. This is a test that can detect chromosomal problems or genetic birth defects in babies, such as Down's Syndrome or Spina Bifida. Although it is not a normal part of regularly scheduled prenatal visits, it is sometimes required to determine the best delivery date in case of a c-section birth. It is also indicated when there are any complications with the baby or with the amniotic fluid. The test does carry with it some small risk of miscarriage and

other complications, so make sure that you understand why you need the test and what the risks are. The test is carried out by passing a thin needle through the uterus to remove a small amount of amniotic fluid that will be put through a number of tests. It sounds like a painful test, but is actually not that bad.





What do you need to know about Child seat safety?

We talk to Shane Dowling, Maxi-Cosi Ireland & N. Ireland Sales Trainer, who answers the most common car seat questions.



Do I have to use a car seat in my vehicle and if so until what age?

"Yes, by law children must travel in an appropriate car seat until they reach 1.5m or 4ft 11in tall or are aged 12, whichever comes first."

Does a newborn baby need to travel rearward-facing?

"Yes, up to 13kg your newborn is safest travelling in a rearward facing car seat. In an accident, the car seat and belt will take the force of the impact while fully supporting your baby's head and neck. You can choose to have a baby car seat (also called infant carrier) that is compatible with a pushchair or a combination car seat that will take your child from birth up to 18kg."

What about longer rearfacing travel and the new i-Size legislation?

"Recent research has confirmed that babies are safer in a rearward facing seat up to at least 15 months. Only then is your child's neck strong enough to withstand the forces of an average head-on collision. That's why the new i-Size regulation (ECE R129) clearly requires that you use rearward facing seats (new i-Size compliant seats) for all babies up to the age of 15 months. For more info on i-Size and longer rearfacing travel. "

Do all car seats fit all cars?

"No, not every seat fits every car so check its compatibility using the car fitting list on the Maxi-Cosi website. Always take your car with you when choosing your new car seat so that you know it fits in the vehicle and can be shown how to install it securely."

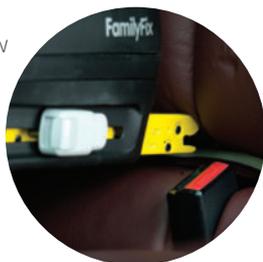
Do I have to use a car seat base with a baby car seat?

"No, all Maxi-Cosi car seats can be installed in the car with the car seat belt but I highly recommend the use of a belted or IsoFix base as the click-on/click-off system makes the seat easier to use and you are less likely to install the car seat incorrectly."

What is IsoFix?

IsoFix is an internationally standardised system to install child car seats in cars correctly without the need for car seat belts. It is very user-friendly and significantly reduces the risk of incorrect installation. IsoFix connection points are permanently connected to the body of the car and your IsoFix car seat or base attaches securely to these connection points. Most new cars even come fitted with a third fixing point for a top tether strap.

For more information on how to install your car seat using IsoFix with a support leg or a top tether, check the "travel safe" section of the Maxi-Cosi website.



All ISOFIX anchor points:



ISOFIX CONNECTORS



TOP TETHER



SUPPORT LEG

“ It may feel like it’s time consuming to install your car seat and your child correctly in the car but it could save your child’s life in the event of an accident. ”

Do I have to use a car seat base with a baby car seat?

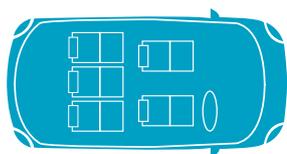
“No, all Maxi-Cosi car seats can be installed in the car with the car seat belt but I highly recommend the use of a belted or IsoFix base as the click-on/click-off system makes the seat easier to use and you are less likely to install the car seat incorrectly.”

How do I know my baby is secured properly in their car seat?

“Before each journey, check that the harness is tightened properly. It should be tight enough for your baby to be comfortable but leave a gap of no more than 1cm between your baby’s chest and the harness.”

Where is the best place to fit a car seat in the car?

“The best place to fit your car seat is in the middle seat in the rear of the vehicle as this reduces the risk of injury from a side-impact crash. The rear passenger is the next best location to fit your



car seat as it is away from the most common side of impact. A rearward facing child seat should never be installed on a front passenger seat if a frontal airbag is fitted.”

When is the right time to move my baby to the next stage car seat?

“Always choose the correct car seat for your child’s current height and weight, age should only be used as an indication. I would highly recommend keeping your baby in the rearward

facing position for as long as possible. As long as your baby’s head is positioned within the seat shell and their weight doesn’t exceed 13kg, rearward facing remains the safest way to transport your baby. Check the car seat categories chart for all details on when to move your child to the next stage car seat.”

Can I use a second-hand car seat?

“No, it might be financially tempting but you can’t be sure a second-hand car seat hasn’t been in a crash. Any seat involved in a collision MUST be replaced as its structure could be compromised even if there is no visible sign of damage. When it comes to installation, the chances are you won’t have the instruction manual for a second-hand car seat and won’t be sure you are fitting it correctly.”

How do I know if my car has IsoFix?

“Check your vehicle’s handbook to see if your car has IsoFix connection points. Most relatively new cars will have IsoFix but the location of the IsoFix fitting points vary between cars and they are sometimes concealed. You can also check the Maxi-Cosi car fitting list on the Maxi-Cosi website or scan this QR code with your smartphone. See the section below on IsoFix.”

More questions?

“If you are still unsure about your choice of car seats or have more questions about the different options, seek advice from your retailer.”



For more information on car seat safety visit the travel safe section at

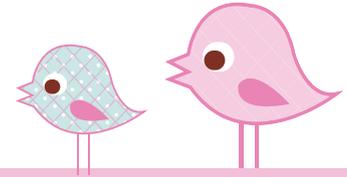
www.maxi-cosi.com



Week 17

It's now week 17 of your pregnancy and your baby is entering a new stage of growth that will cause some dramatic changes to her looks. As for you, this may be the week that you finally feel your precious little one move.

Your baby this week



Your baby this week



At week 17 your baby is now around the size of an onion and measures about 13cm (5 inches) in length. Her weight is now close to 170 grammes (6oz).

A new kind of growth spurt is just around the corner for your baby. Until this point, your baby has met many milestones in her development such as the growth of limbs and internal organs.

Soon, she will be developing fat tissue which will not only fill out her little body, but will also serve to regulate her body temperature and store energy. In fact, in an 8 pound newborn baby, more than 5 pounds of the weight is pure fat.

If you were to be able to see your baby during week 17, you would see a long, lanky baby, with thin legs and arms, and skin that is extremely wrinkled. However, once your baby starts developing fat tissue, her body will start to plump up and she will look more like a newborn baby with chubby cheeks and legs.

Your baby's face is also continuing to develop as eyes and ears move into their proper position. Her brain is beginning to develop the areas that will control her sense of taste, touch, hearing, smell, and vision. It is known that even in these early stages of pregnancy, your baby can hear and will be able to see light in several weeks.

At only 170 grammes, your baby is still very tiny but is also very active. Even at this small size, your baby is now large enough that she could kick and make movements that you can actually feel.



Pregnancy Tip

Leg cramps are a common side effect of pregnancy. It's thought that leg cramps are due to a build-up of acids in your muscles; however, what causes this build-up is a mystery. Regardless of the cause, they hurt! To help stave off nightly leg cramps, drink plenty of fluids, stretch your calf and foot muscles daily, try not to cross your legs, and take a warm bath before bed.

Your body this week

As you enter week 17 of your pregnancy, you will start noticing those slight feelings of movement in your abdomen as your baby swims and squirms. It will feel like a fluttery sensation, almost like when you get butterflies in your stomach. For first time mums, it can be hard to recognise these sensations and your baby. The sensation is so light at first that you may mistake it for gas. If you've had a baby previously you may instantly recognise them as baby movement.

Your body is continuing to change in subtle ways. You might see a few extra pounds accumulating around your waistline this week, and you may start to see some changes happening to your skin. It's very common to have dry, itchy skin during pregnancy. Breakouts of acne are also a common symptom. Your body is also producing extra pigment now which can cause dark spots to develop on your face or linea nigra, running from your navel down your abdomen. All skin changes that occur during pregnancy are harmless and will go away after your baby is born.



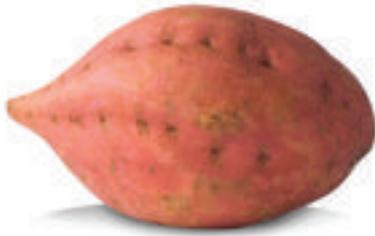
During the second trimester of pregnancy, it is common to feel resurgence of your sex drive. Many couples worry that having sex will somehow harm the baby, but this is not the case. As long as there are no complications such as placenta praevia (a low lying placenta), or problems with a bleeding or a weak cervix, having sex is perfectly harmless to your baby. You might notice that

there is some slight cramping after sex as the muscles in your uterus may slightly contract. These cramps should be minor and will go away within a few minutes.

Week 18

Week 18 and your baby's movements are starting to be much more noticeable now. There are also some miraculous changes taking place in your baby's central nervous system. As for you, this is an exciting time as you feel your baby's movements more and more each day. Your body is also experiencing some changes that will affect your day-to-day activities.

Your baby this week



Your sweetie is now around the size of a sweet potato, or about 14cm (5.5 inches), weighing in around 190 grammes (nearly 7oz).

Your baby's activity level is increasing every day and he is now constantly flexing all arm and legs muscles, neck muscles, facial muscles, and even curling up the toes and fingers. If you have not yet felt your baby's movements, you soon will. If you have already started feeling your baby's movements, from this point forward the intensity will increase and you will feel new and different sensations each day.

At 18 weeks into your pregnancy, your baby's skin is still transparent. Your baby's ears, which have now moved to their final position on the side of the head, are now beginning to stick out and take on their proper shape. Week 18 also means that if you're baby is female, her uterus and fallopian tubes are formed and in place, and if your baby is a male, the genitals are now noticeable on ultrasound.

A milestone in your baby's development at week 18 is the beginning of the process known as myelination, which is the formation of the protective cover of myelin around the nerves. This is an important development in your baby's central nervous system. The myelin serves to insulate the nerves of the brain and spinal cord to allow transmission of impulses along nerve cells. Without this protective layer of protein and fatty substances, diseases like Multiple Sclerosis can take over. The formation of myelin continues throughout your pregnancy and well into the first year of life.

Pregnancy Tip



You might want to consider starting to do your Kegels soon. What are Kegels? They are an exercise that will strengthen the pelvic muscles. They are also helpful in preventing bladder leakage which can occur as your pregnancy progresses. Additionally, doing Kegels can keep pregnancy haemorrhoids from occurring and will help you heal faster after childbirth. Read more about how to do a Kegel exercise and start now.

Your body this week

Week 18 of your pregnancy may find you hungrier than you have been in the past several weeks. There are several reasons for this, but the main reason is that you are starting to feel better. Your morning sickness is subsiding and may even be gone completely. You have much more energy now and are being more active, and your baby is growing and requiring more nutrients from your body. It's critical that you make wise decisions when it comes to meal time. Choose foods that are high in nutrients and good for you. Leave the fried foods alone and try to avoid sweets. These are just empty calories and do nothing good for you or your baby. Naturally, that is easier said than done when you are craving an ice cream sundae with hot fudge and whipped cream! You don't have to totally ignore your cravings - just make sure that you do not overindulge.

Your cardiovascular system is also experiencing some changes now. Sometime during the second trimester, your blood pressure could be lower than it normally is. This is a normal symptom and nothing to be concerned

with, but you do need to recognise the feeling. You may feel dizzy if you stand up too fast or get out of bed too fast. So, just slow down and everything will be fine.

Also, when you lay down, it's now best that you lie on your side instead of lying flat on your back. This is because your growing uterus can compress one of your major veins when lying flat on your back. The danger is that the blood flow to

your heart can be decreased. So, try different positions and use pillows under your hip or to prop up your upper leg when you lay on your side.



Week 19

Week 19 is already here! Time is starting to go by quickly now. You are feeling pretty good now and your baby is growing at a rapid pace. During the 19th week, you'll be interested to know that your baby is developing his senses and will soon be able to recognise your voice!

Your baby this week



At week 19, your baby is now about the size of a mango, approximately 15cm (6 inches), and weighs close to 240 grammes (8 ½ ounces). Since last week, your baby has grown about a half inch in length!

Your baby's arms and legs are now proportionate to his body and to each other. His kidneys are producing urine and your baby is emptying his bladder about every 30 minutes. The hair on your baby's head is coming in now and the skin is forming a waxy protective coating called the vernix caseosa. This coating, which is also called vernix, is a white cheesy looking substance that prevents the amniotic fluid from irritating your baby's delicate skin.

In week 19, your baby's brain is working overtime developing the areas that control his senses; taste, smell, vision, hearing, and touch. The ability to hear develops fairly early. Your baby has more than likely been hearing body sounds from inside your womb for a few weeks now. As this sense further develops, experts believe that your baby will begin to hear the outside world as well and will even be able to distinguish your voice from the voice of others. In fact, studies have shown that foetal heart rate lowers when the mum is talking. So not only can your baby hear you, but the sound of your voice calms them. So, you may want to start singing songs, reading books, and having long discussion with your baby every day.



Pregnancy Tip

It's not too early to begin looking into childcare. Some crèches have long waiting lists, and it's better that you get on these lists sooner than later. Besides, it is much easier to search for childcare now than wait until you have to take your precious bundle along for the ride.

Your body this week

Week 19 is here and your waistline is expanding. Your abdomen will start growing even faster in following weeks to come. This rapid growth can come with some aches and pains. You may notice that you have some achiness in your lower abdomen, or once in a while there may even be a brief pain that feels almost stabbing. This could happen on one side or the other, or on both sides of the abdomen, and is more likely to happen when you move too quickly. It's most likely the result of stretching of the ligaments that hold up your uterus. It's called round ligament pain. Many women experience this pain several times during their pregnancy when there is a rush of growth in the abdominal area. The pain is normal and is not a cause for concern. However, if the pain is intense, you may want to contact your physician.

Skin changes are still occurring in the 19th week of pregnancy. In fact, they will continue throughout your pregnancy. You may notice that the palms of your hands are becoming red. Again, this is normal and nothing to worry about. Like other changes to the skin, it is caused from the added amounts of estrogen in your system. Dark patches may also show up on your cheeks, forehead, or upper lip. If you have not experienced this yet, it is called chloasma, or 'mask of pregnancy'. The added hormones in your body are causing you to generate more pigment. Again, this is nothing to worry about, but you will want to use a good sun block when you go outside.



Week 20

Week 20 means that you have made it half way through your pregnancy! Your baby is steadily gaining weight and it probably feels like you have a melon in your belly. Although there are some new side effects coming in the second half of your pregnancy, you should feel pretty good at this point.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a cantaloupe melon, or about 16.5cm (6.5 inches) from head to bottom and weighs in around 300 grammes (10.5oz).

Because a baby's legs are curled up in the fetal position, during the first 20 weeks of pregnancy

measurements are taken from the top of the head to the bottom. It's referred to as the 'crown to rump' measurement. This week, your baby's crown to rump measurement is around 16½ cm (6½ inches).

In week 20, your baby is swallowing amniotic fluid and the digestive system is producing meconium, which is the greenish-black sticky substance that results from your baby's digestive system while in the womb. The meconium is stored in the bowels until birth. At that time, the meconium will help your baby have her first bowel movement. Occasionally, a baby will pass meconium in the womb before birth or during labour. When that happens, sometimes the baby can inhale some of the meconium along with amniotic fluid which can be dangerous. This occurs in about 5 – 10 percent of all births and is more common when babies are past their due date. The danger of a baby inhaling the meconium is that there could be breathing problems including pneumonia.

During delivery, if a baby has passed meconium, it is immediately recognisable to the doctors. If meconium is present, the mouth and trachea is suctioned and in some cases, can be washed out with a saline solution. The baby will then be carefully monitored for several days. In most instances of meconium aspiration, babies fully recover with no long term damage to the lungs.



Pregnancy Tip

Since you are halfway through your pregnancy, you should celebrate! Here are some ideas:

- Make time for yourself to indulge in something that you love.
- Buy yourself some scented candles or a nice nightgown.
- Go for a prenatal massage.
- Have professional portraits taken to remember how beautiful you look pregnant.

Your body this week

Congratulations are in order - you are halfway there! 20 weeks is such a turning point in a pregnancy. The top of uterus (the fundus) is now about level with your navel and your weight gain should be close to 4.5 kilos (10 pounds). You will more than likely gain ½ to 1 kilo (1 to 2 pounds) per week for the remainder of your pregnancy. Of course, this is based on an average sized, healthy pre-pregnancy weight. If you are too thin or overweight, your doctor will suggest the amount of weight you should gain each week.

You might start to notice sleeping difficulties now. As your belly grows, finding a comfortable position can be hard. Use extra pillows and try lying on your side with your leg propped up. It may also be comforting to place a pillow behind the small of your back.

During pregnancy, it's important to make sure that you are receiving the proper amount of iron. Your body needs more iron now in order to move the added amount of blood in your body. In addition to your prenatal vitamins, you need to take a look at your diet. If you need to add more iron, consider red meat, one of the best sources of iron. The dark meat of poultry

and shellfish are another great source of iron. If you're not big on meat, consider including spinach and other iron-rich vegetables, soy products, raisins, prune juice, and cereals that are fortified with iron.

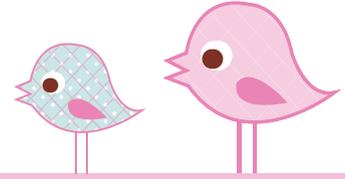
At this stage of your pregnancy, you may want to start looking into childbirth education classes. These classes are especially important for first time mums and dads. Ask your doctor to recommend a class. They will usually direct you to the hospital where you will be having your baby.



Week 21

You are in your 21st week of pregnancy now and that means you are more than half way there! Your baby is growing by the minute and becoming more active every day. You are experiencing some changes too and you may find that your skin is behaving as it was in your teenage years.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a banana, or about 26cm (10.5 inches) (now measured from head to toe) and weighs in around 360 grammes (13oz).

As your baby's weight increases, so does her fat accumulation. Through most of the pregnancy, the fine layer of hair (called lanugo) that recently formed all over your baby does the job of regulating temperature. As fat is accumulated, this layer of hair begins to fall off and the fat takes over the job of regulating your baby's temperature.

If it is not already happening, you will soon wonder if your baby is doing karate inside your womb as kicks and punches become a normal part of your day. Additionally, your baby's movements will now become more scheduled and you will start to see that there is a pattern. Perhaps the mornings will be more active than evenings, or after you eat you might feel your baby move in a particular way that is different from other movements throughout the day.

At 21 weeks gestation, your baby will actually begin to sleep. Yes, your baby sleeps in the womb! You might be surprised to learn that, eventually, your baby will even have rapid eye movement, or REM, during sleep. Researchers do not know if this means that your unborn baby is capable of dreaming, but the possibility is certainly intriguing.

Another development in this 21st week of pregnancy is that your baby's skin is now starting to become less translucent and will continue to do so until birth. Although fingernails and toenails are formed, they are not yet hardened. This protects your baby from scratching her skin or the amniotic sac while in the womb.

Pregnancy Tip



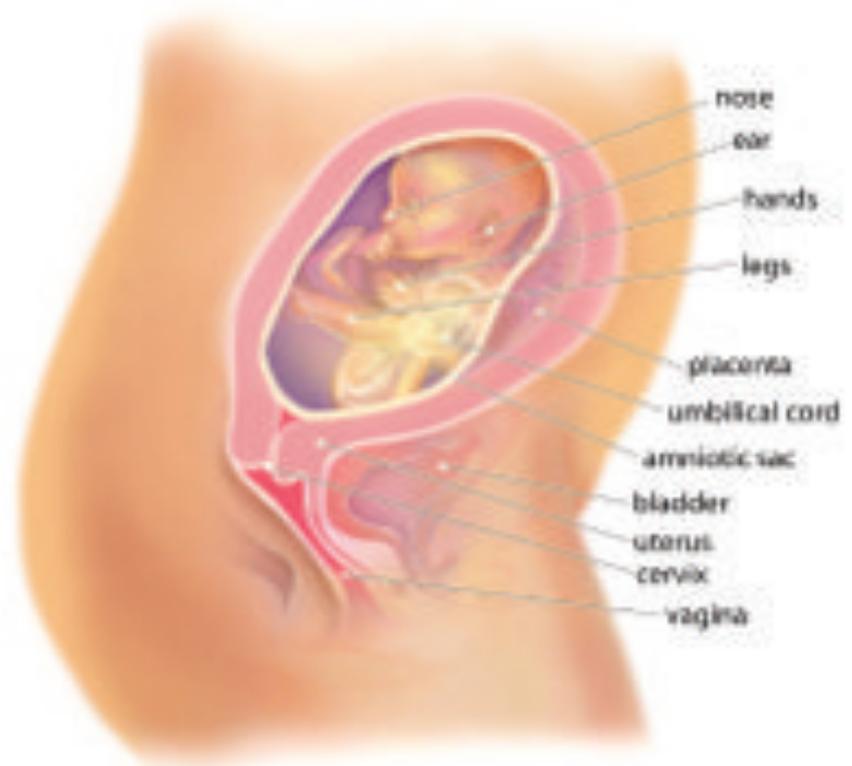
Another not so attractive symptom of pregnancy is varicose veins. There is not a lot that you can do about them once they are there, but you can minimize or prevent them by getting daily exercise, elevating your feet and legs when you can, wear maternity hose or support hose, and sleep on your left side which is known to help blood flow during pregnancy.

Your body this week

At 21 weeks, you are probably showing a little - not too much yet, but it is still enough to make your clothes feel tight. You may even have started to wear maternity clothes by now. Additionally, you are probably feeling pretty good. The nausea and other early pregnancy symptoms have mostly gone away, and you have more energy these days. To add to that, you are getting extremely excited to welcome your baby into the world. Make sure that you enjoy this time in your pregnancy because the third trimester is right around the corner and will likely bring on some new aches and pains.

For now, there may be some minor body issues to contend with, such as acne. Yes, 'acne', just like you had when you were a teenager! Your hormone levels will increase the production of oil in your glands which can lead to breakouts. If you don't already have a daily skin cleansing routine, start one now to keep the acne at bay. Do not use any acne treatment, even over the counter treatments, until you clear it with your doctor. Some of the ingredients in these products can be harmful to your unborn baby.

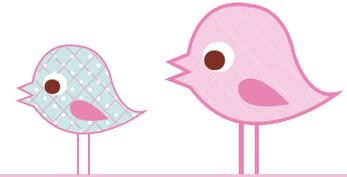
Spider veins may also show up as you gain weight throughout your pregnancy. A spider vein is a group of tiny blood vessels that show up close to the surface of your skin. They will usually appear on the legs, face, or ankles. During pregnancy, these spider veins are caused by the increased amount of blood that is circulating in your body. They are harmless and mostly go away after delivery.



Week 22

It's hard to believe that the 22nd week of your pregnancy is already here. You and your baby have reached some incredible milestones over the last several weeks, and this week, your baby continues to mature as you prepare for more changes that come in week 22.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a papaya measuring between 26cm and 30cm (10.5 to 12 inches) and weighing between 360 and 600 grammes (12 to 21oz).

Your baby's features are now so defined that he looks almost exactly like a full term newborn baby. Your baby has fully developed little lips that you will soon be able to kiss goodnight. He has working eyelids that will eventually let you know when he is sleeping. His little ears that you will one day whisper into are now developed, as is his little nose, which you will soon be pinching. Your baby even has tiny eyebrows that before you know it will be raised in curiosity at the world around him!

If you could see your baby right now, you would see that his skin is quite wrinkled at this point. Don't worry though: as he gains weight, fat will fill in the wrinkles. His eyes are almost complete now with the exception of the iris. It still needs to be coloured. Pigment will soon be present and the iris will darken.

Your baby's internal organs continue to develop and practice their essential functions. The heart pumps blood through the circulatory system, the kidneys produce urine, and the digestive tract swallows and digests the amniotic fluid. The lungs are among the last of the major organs to fully develop. At this stage in your pregnancy, the folds of the lungs are beginning to separate. Imagine a rose bud opening. The lungs will not be fully mature until very close to the end of your pregnancy.

Pregnancy Tip



You may find that your fingers become larger as your pregnancy progresses. It's either caused by water retention or just gaining weight. Either way, if you wear rings you'll need to keep an eye on them. If they feel tight, it's best to remove them now instead of waiting until it hurts to take them off, or worse yet, you have to have them cut off.

If you cannot stand the thought of not wearing your wedding band, consider wearing it on a chain around your neck - where it will be even closer to your heart!

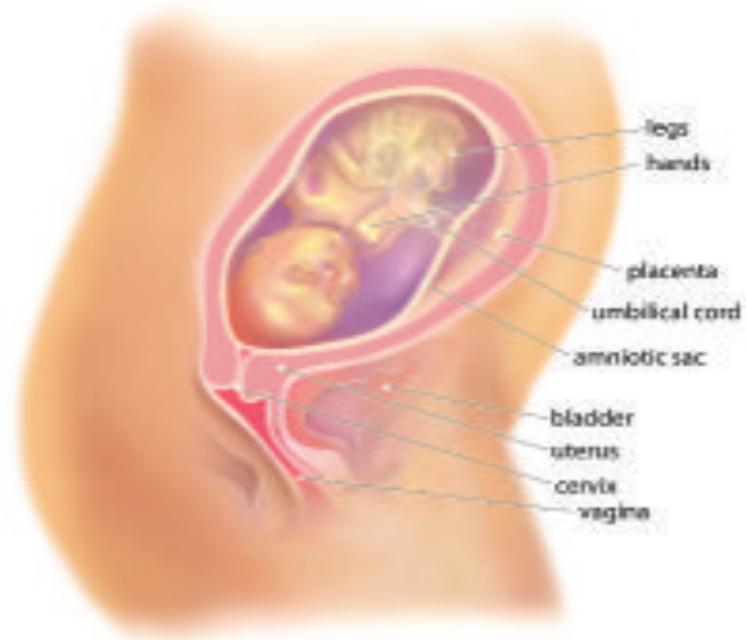
Your body this week

At 22 weeks of pregnancy, you are showing quite a bit now -that always makes people want to touch your belly!

It's fascinating to feel a baby move and people cannot help themselves. This may be perfectly fine for your family members or close friends, but many times it can make you uncomfortable if it is anyone else. Remember that it is alright to tell someone not to touch your tummy if you don't want them to.

This is also a time when many women find that they get to hear other people's opinions whether they want to hear them or not. "You need to gain more weight." ... "You are gaining too much weight." ... "You should eat better." ... "When I was pregnant..." This unwanted advice can weigh on you (pardon the pun!). Most people are just trying to be helpful, so try to take these comments in your stride. Your doctor is the one person that you should listen to and take advice from.

As your weight increases you may notice that you are now getting some stretch marks around your abdomen, buttocks, thighs, or breasts. Most women will have some degree of stretch marks. The amount you have depends on more than your weight.



As with skin discolourations during pregnancy, genetics plays a large role. There are several topical solutions on the market that claim to help prevent stretch marks, but there is no scientific proof that these remedies work. However, it is recommended that you keep your skin moisturised to alleviate the itching that comes with stretching skin.

Your second trimester ultrasound should be coming soon. It's a painless procedure that will help the doctor determine many things about you and your baby.

For instance, your doctor will be able to measure the placenta to determine if it is healthy and

providing the right amount of nutrients to your baby. Another important result from your second ultrasound is that it will confirm your due date. A fun part of this ultrasound is that you may even be able to see your baby sucking his or her thumb! If you are lucky, you may be able to have a three or four dimensional ultrasound, which produces very detailed images. Some say they can even see their baby's eyelashes during this high-tech test.

Week 23

As you enter into week 23 of your pregnancy, you'll notice that your baby is squirming more now, and kicking a little harder than last week. Your baby is practicing how to breathe and even grasping on to things! During this time, you may experience a new side effect of pregnancy; swelling. Read on to learn what to expect and how to alleviate this.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a papaya.

She is really putting on the weight now. This week, she weighs in between 360 and 600 grammes (12 to 21 ounces), but it probably just a little over

a pound. If you were to measure your baby this week, she would probably be about 28cm (11½ inches) in length.

Tiny blood vessels in your baby's lungs are developing daily in preparation for breathing. In fact, your baby will actually practice breathing in the womb by inhaling and exhaling small amounts of the amniotic fluid. Her pancreas is regularly producing insulin which will regulate the levels of sugar in her blood, and all the bones in her body are continuing to harden.

Your baby's activity level is probably increasing now since she has the ability to hear things from the outside world. A door slamming, a dog barking, a horn sounding, and the sound of you and your family's voices will soon become all too familiar to your little doll. For now, sudden loud noises may make her jump as if she were frightened. Not to worry though. At this stage, your little one does not understand the concept of being frightened; it is more of a reflex on her part.

As the smaller muscles in the fingers and hands become more developed in week 23, your baby is using them to grab and touch different parts of her body. She can grasp her umbilical cord, her ear, her nose, and may even grab hold of her other hand. She can also wiggle her fingers individually now as well as scrunch up her toes.

Pregnancy Tip



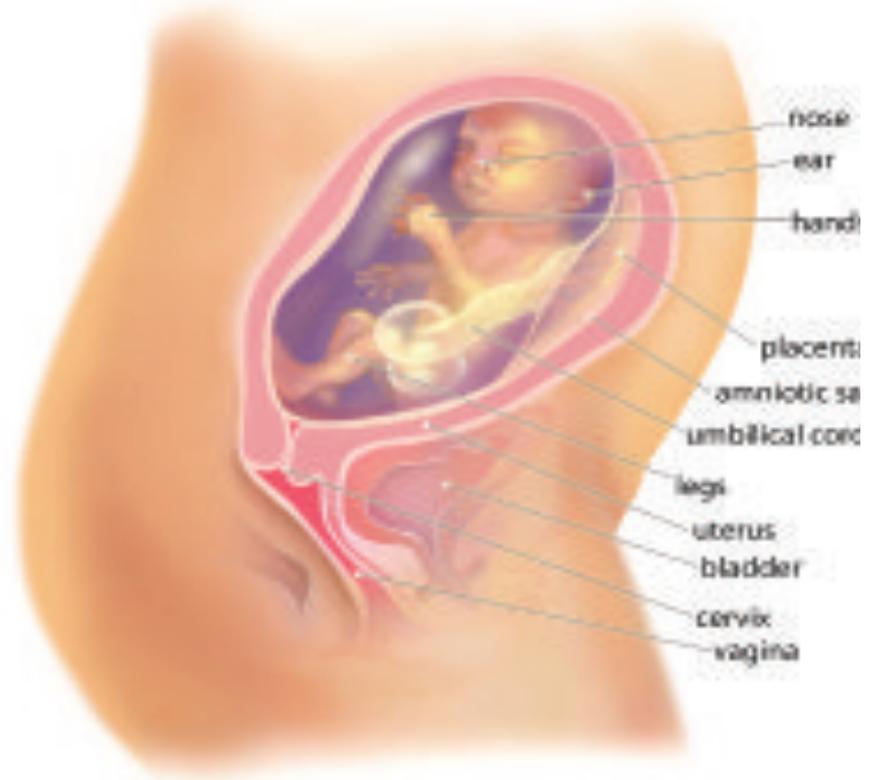
With the hormonal changes that are happening in your body, you could experience the blues now and then during your pregnancy. Don't feel guilty about it. It is perfectly normal. When the blues hit you, try to focus on the future and the things you are looking forward to, like holding your beautiful baby for the first time and looking into your baby's eyes. It's pretty hard to stay down when you think of such things. It's also helpful to have the support of family and friends at this time. A talk with a girlfriend can help you make it through the blues.

Your body this week

As your pregnancy rapidly progresses, you could start to have some swelling in your ankles and your feet. Swelling is more likely to occur when the weather is warm, after you have been on your feet for long periods of time, or at the end of the day. Circulation is slower now that you have gained weight, and your blood chemistry has changed. This leads to water retention, or edema. After you have your baby, your body will naturally shed the extra fluid as your blood chemistry returns to its pre-pregnancy state. In fact, you may notice that the first few days after delivery, you will sweat a lot and have to urinate frequently. If you are starting to experience swelling in your feet and ankles, make sure to elevate your legs when you can and lie on your left side to increase circulation. And don't forget to drink lots of fluids. Many women will avoid fluids when they experience swelling thinking that this will help reduce edema. This is not the case. Your body must stay hydrated to prevent edema. Wearing support hose or socks and having some sort of daily exercise is also necessary to prevent the swelling from getting worse.

While swelling is a common occurrence, especially in the later months of a pregnancy; if

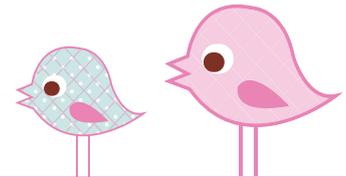
you have excessive swelling, it could be an indication of a serious condition called preeclampsia. The typical symptoms of preeclampsia include sudden swelling or severe swelling of the ankles and feet, swelling in the hands, face, and puffy eyes. High blood pressure accompanies preeclampsia as well and can be extremely dangerous to mum and baby if left untreated. Make sure to tell your doctor about any swelling that you are experiencing. It's more than likely normal but your doctor should be made aware of it.



Week 24

Week 24 is here and your baby is getting bigger and smarter by the minute. Your baby's brain is rapidly developing and his lungs are starting to mature. Your belly is also getting bigger minute by minute; or at least you may feel that way. An important blood test should happen sometime around the 24th week. Read on!

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a papaya. Most of the weight gain now is muscle and fat deposits that will soon fill out all the wrinkles in his skin. At about 30cm (12 inches) long now,

your baby is really utilising the space in your abdomen. And, as he continues to grow, your baby will do less swimming around and more punching and kicking!

Your baby's brain is in a state of rapid development at this time. His lungs continue to gradually open and are developing the branch-like structure that will be the bronchial tubes. Additionally, the cells of the lungs are now producing surfactant, which is a substance that will allow the lungs to inflate once your baby breathes his first breath. Your baby's skin is still mostly transparent, but cells are producing pigment, so it won't be long until the skin looks less translucent.

If you have had Braxton Hicks contractions, you've probably wondered if your baby can feel them. Many women will experience Braxton Hicks contractions during the second trimester of pregnancy. Braxton Hicks contractions are a tightening in the uterus. This is a common side effect and do not cause any changes to the cervix. Although these little contractions can sometimes be sharp enough to take your breath away, don't worry. Your baby is more than likely not even aware of it.

Pregnancy Tip



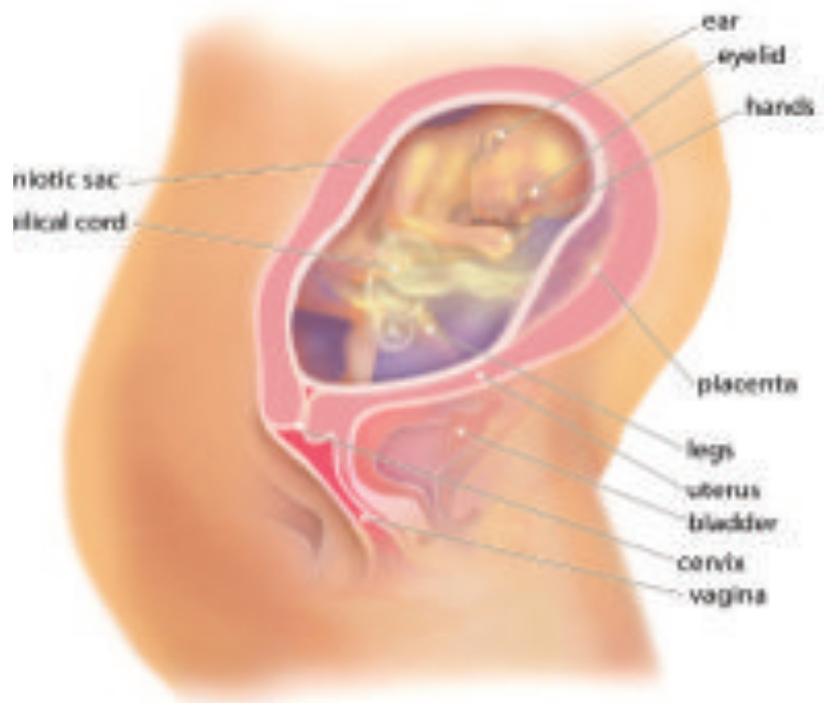
Are you ready to bring your new little bundle home? There's so much to do! Paint and decorate the nursery, clean the carpets, baby-proof the house, the list goes on and on. But, it is important that you not get carried away and remember to not expose yourself to chemicals. Make a list with your spouse and decide what tasks are safe for you to tackle. You should avoid climbing ladders, painting, heavy lifting, and strenuous chores that cause strain.

Your body this week

It's now week 24 and you are really seeing changes to your tummy now. Your fundus (the top of your uterus) is now above your belly button and you definitely need maternity clothes by now.

Many doctors suggest that a glucose tolerance test (OGCT/OGTT) be done sometime between the 24th week and the 28th week. This is a blood test that detects gestational diabetes, which is the body's inability to create and use insulin properly resulting in a build-up of glucose in the body. Gestational diabetes can be dangerous to an unborn baby when not properly treated. Babies born to mums with gestational diabetes are usually larger than they should be because the excess glucose turns to an overabundance of fat which is delivered to the baby through the placenta. Large babies are at risk of malformation of the bones, breathing problems, and weight problems as an adult. In addition to these added risks, babies that are large due to gestational diabetes are usually delivered C-section as the large size can cause injuries to the baby or mum during natural birth.

Only a small proportion of women will develop gestational diabetes during their pregnancy



(it's more common on women with a BMI of more than 30). Additionally, once the woman delivers the baby, the diabetes subsides. There is a greater chance that the woman will develop type-2 diabetes in the future but the added risk is low. If your doctor tells you that you have gestational diabetes, don't panic. The condition is completely treatable but will require you to make some lifestyle changes. You must eat a diet that is designed to maintain low levels of sugar in your blood, get daily exercise, and closely monitor your weight.

Week 25

Week 25 is here now and you may be getting excited and anxious about what the next couple of months will bring. This can also be a time when your moods can change with the snap of a finger. One minute you may feel happy, and the next, you may be crying. Read on to find out how to manage this normal symptom of pregnancy.

Your baby this week



At week 25, your baby is now approximately the size of an aubergine. Around now, your little one now measures anywhere between 34 to 38 cm (13 to 15 inches) long and weighs around 680 grammes to

1 kg (2.5 to 3.8 pounds) – quite a bit of growth since just last week.

The irises of your baby's eyes are not quite complete yet, but the rest of your baby's eyes are fully formed. It's believed that if a light were held against your stomach at this point, your baby could see it from inside the womb! Another exciting development is that the heartbeat is now so strong that if someone were to put their ear on your tummy, they will be able to hear it!

Your baby's immune system is getting ready to face the outside world. A certain amount of natural immunity is delivered to your baby from your body. This is called passive immunity. Once your baby is born, her own immune system will be stimulated by germs around the sixth day of her life, and she will begin to produce antibodies that will protect her from disease and illness. The maternal immunity that you have passed to your baby will start to fade and by the time she is 12 months old, she will have a complete immune system of her own.

The fine details of your baby's spine are developing now as well and blood vessels in the lungs are growing. Bones continue to harden and the nostrils of your baby's nose are opening now. At 25 weeks, your baby's taste buds are developed to the point that she can taste the amniotic fluid that she swallows. The amniotic fluid is known to be affected by what you eat. So, your baby may be able to sample what you had for dinner!

Pregnancy Tip

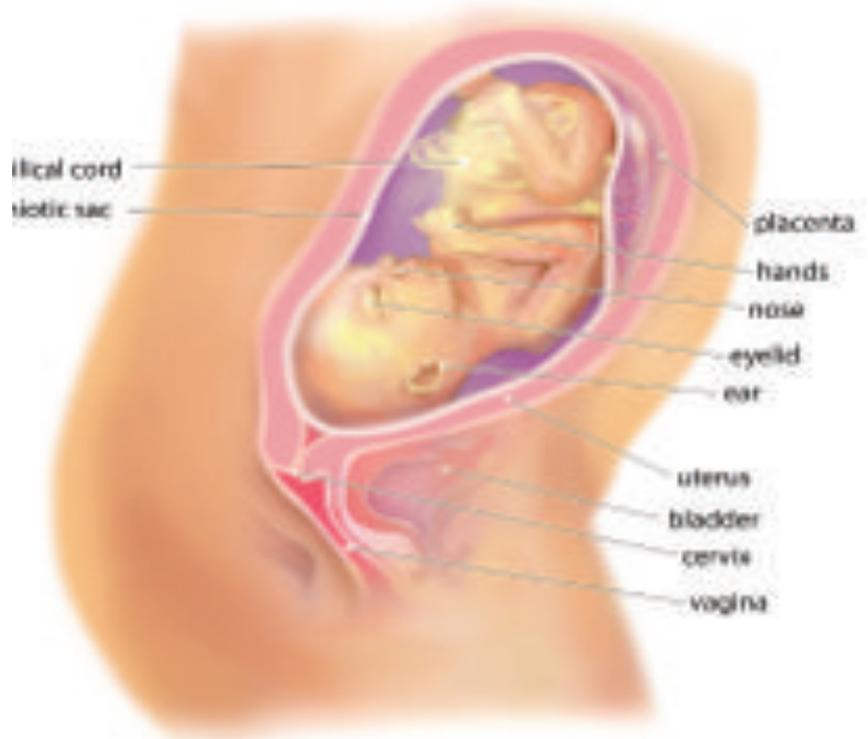


As you get closer to your third trimester of pregnancy, you will notice a dramatic increase in your appetite. You will probably want to eat everything in sight during the coming weeks! This is because your baby will put on the majority of her weight during this time and your body needs more nutrition to feed your baby. Just remember during these ever increasing hunger pangs, that you still need to maintain a healthy diet and stay away from sweets and empty calories.

Your body this week

Although there is still a lot of room left in your womb, it is probably beginning to feel pretty crowded in there. At 25 weeks gestation, your baby's activity level is increasing. You are far enough along now that you can more than likely watch your tummy move as your baby kicks, punches, and squirms.

Mood swings may hit you late in your second trimester. Most women will experience mood swings early on in the first trimester, only for them to go away during the second trimester, but as the end of the third trimester approaches, they are known to resurface. If they do, try not to worry about it. It is normal. After all, your hormone levels are rising more and more as you get closer to your big day. Try to focus on the joys of your pregnancy and what the future holds. You should also have someone to talk to, whether that is a relative or a girlfriend. If you feel that your mood swings are extreme, mention it to your doctor. There are cases where severe mood swings are actually a form of clinical depression. To gauge whether your mood swings are severe, answer the following questions:



- Do you feel overwhelmed?
- Do you feel disconnected from your pregnancy?
- Are you finding it hard to get excited about your pregnancy?
- Are you shutting people out?
- Do you throw tantrums and cry for no reason?
- Are you losing your temper more often?
- Is your patience non-existent?
- Are your friends and family affected by your mood swings?

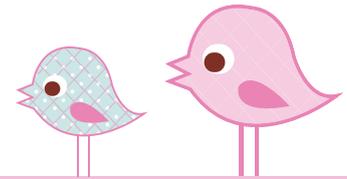
If your answer was 'yes' to any of these questions, you should talk to your doctor about how

you are feeling. In severe cases, there are anti-depressant medications that are safe to take during pregnancy and will help you get back to feeling like your old self again.

Week 26

It's hard to believe that week 26 is already here, isn't it? The time has gone by quickly and the time remaining will seem to go by even quicker. This week, your baby's progress is marked by the appearance of testicles in boys, and the movement of ovaries in girls. As for you, you might experience a new pain this week, but it is easy to manage and prevent if you know how.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of an aubergine.

His weight is now close to 800 grammes (1¾ pounds) and he measures about 35cm (14 inches) long. Your baby is a bit

more crowded in your womb than he was last week, but he is still able to move around quite dramatically. You feel his movements constantly now.

Your baby's ears are now more defined, and the inner nerves are much more developed making the sense of hearing much more acute. Your baby can probably hear your voice, your partners' voice, and the everyday sounds in your world.

Your baby is continuing to practice his breathing skills as well. He inhales and exhales the amniotic fluid in preparation for taking that first big breath of air at birth. The bronchial tubes are forming and surfactant, which will help your baby breath at birth, is being stored inside the lobes of the lungs.

In the 26th week of your baby is generating brain cells at an astounding rate. The areas that control the five senses – taste, touch, smell, hearing, and sight – are being finely tuned now. His skin is quite wrinkled still but will slowly gets plumped up as fat develops. As well as being wrinkled, your baby's skin is still quite transparent. If you could look inside, you would see blood vessels through his skin. The layer of protective hair called 'lanugo' is still present and will remain until shortly before or shortly after birth. If your baby is a boy, his testicles are beginning their travel from inside his body to their position in the scrotum. For a girl, the ovaries are making their way to their location. This process will take about two of three days to complete.

Pregnancy Tip

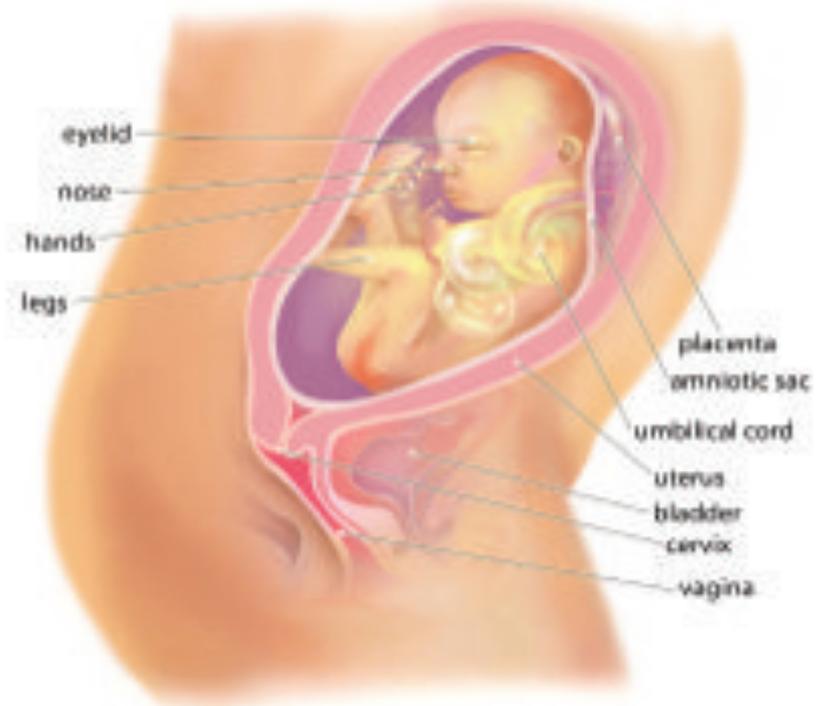


As your waistline diminishes, you may find it hard to feel good in your clothes. And as we all know, when you feel bad about how you look, you tend to feel bad about everything. And, since feeling good when you're pregnant is so important, go shopping! Today's maternity clothes are chic and elegant. Make sure that you splurge on a couple of great maternity outfits so you can always feel good about how you look.

Your body this week

It's now week 26 and you are probably in overdrive trying to prepare for your precious arrival. Childbirth classes are in full swing; the nursery is almost complete; you have doctor's appointments; all this along with the normal activities required in your day. You may find that you are getting exhausted easily with this hectic pace. So, you must make it a priority to get plenty of rest, eat properly, and drink lots of fluids. It's easy to forget these things when you're busy, but you have to think of your baby first.

Your growing uterus could be the cause of lower back aches around this time of your pregnancy. As your uterus gets bigger and weighs more, your centre of gravity is shifted, the muscles in your abdomen become weaker as they stretch, and there could be nerves affected by the weight of your pregnancy. In addition, the added hormones in your body can loosen your ligaments and joints causing pain. You may feel physically worn out at the end of the day. If you are having lower back pain, try to limit the amount of time that you sit in one position. Do not lift heavy objects or do a lot of bending over. Try warm baths or use

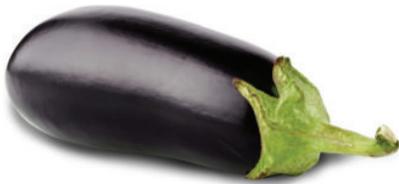


warm or cool compresses, depending on your preference, to relieve the pain. Although it's not always easy to do as your centre of gravity changes, try to maintain correct posture during the day. This will help the muscles stay in their proper position. When you are physically active such as walking, cleaning house, and standing, take frequent breaks and sit down. It also helps the muscles of the lower back if you sleep on your side with a pillow between your knees and a small pillow under your protruding abdomen.

Week 27

Well, it is now week 27 and the time is going by fast. Your baby's milestone for this week is her changing position. She is now beginning to reposition herself in preparation for birth. As for you, week 27 can add some new symptoms. Some familiar symptoms could also reoccur.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of an aubergine. Week 27 and your baby's weight is now close to 900 grammes (2 pounds).

Her length is about 37cm (14½ inches) if her legs were straightened out. Your baby has a set schedule now, sleeping and waking up at regular intervals. She opens and closes her eyes, sucks her thumb, clasps her hand together, and even makes facial expressions. If you were to have an ultrasound at this time of your pregnancy, you would see incredible detail. This is especially true for the 3D or 4D ultrasounds. They are so detailed, they almost look like photographs.

Your baby's brain is extremely active now and is continuing to develop some of the more detailed areas, such as memory centres and the areas that control cognitive thinking. Her lungs are developing more every day although at this stage, they are still quite immature. You probably notice some very rhythmic movement occasionally. It's probably your baby having the hiccups. They are not bothered by these hiccups though. So don't worry about that.

Your baby is certainly more crowded in the womb now. She still manages to move quite a lot though - you feel her kicks and punches more now. And, if you look at your tummy when you feel these movements, you will more than likely notice that your stomach rising and falling as your precious little one turns and squirms.

At 27 weeks, your baby is also beginning to slowly position herself for her journey down into the pelvis. She may even be positioned head down already.

Pregnancy Tip



Many women find that they have excessive gas during their pregnancy. The reason is that the increased level of progesterone causes the muscles of the intestines to relax and slows down digestions. As food takes longer to digest, more gas is created which leads to bloating, burping, and flatulence. Relieve excessive gas by cutting back on the foods that cause gas like beans, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, asparagus, and cabbage. Certain starchy foods can also cause gas, and if you are lactose intolerant, dairy products should be avoided.

Your body this week

It's now 27th week and you are headed for the finish line! There could be some new symptoms coming your way in the next several weeks. If you have not yet had backaches and leg cramps, you may now. As your weight increases, your back muscles and your leg muscles take a beating. Make sure to get plenty of rest and don't overdo it now!

It's important for you to know the symptoms of early labour and the signs of things that can go wrong at this stage in your pregnancy. If you notice any of the following symptoms, make sure to contact your doctor.

- Pressure in your pelvic area like the baby is pushing down
- Persistent menstrual-like cramps or abdominal pain
- More than four contractions in less than one hour
- A vaginal discharge that is watery, bloody, discoloured, or mucus-like in texture
- You feel less movement of your baby
- Tenderness of the abdomen
- Painful urination
- Decreased urination
- Vomiting accompanied with pain or fever
- Fever over 37.5 degrees C with chills.
- Altered vision; blurred, doubled, or seeing spots
- Severe headache with blurred vision
- Swelling of the face
- Swelling of the hands, legs, feet, and ankles that is sudden and severe
- Pain in the leg that is persistent and severe
- Fainting, dizziness, or heart palpitations
- Trouble breathing
- Severe diarrhoea or constipation
- All over itching
- Any existing condition that worsens



This is also a good time to start thinking about breastfeeding or bottle feeding. Breastfeeding is beneficial in so many ways. It is known that breastfeeding can reduce the risks of ear and respiratory infections, type 2 diabetes, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and certain stomach and intestinal infections. Babies who are breastfed are less likely to be obese as an adult, and are less likely to contract colds and flu. If you plan on breastfeeding, now is the time to get informed.

Week 28

It's now week 28 and that means there are only 13 more weeks left in your pregnancy! The time really does go by fast doesn't it? Your doctor's appointments will increase now and so will your need to find a bathroom! Your baby is really getting big now and his body fat is piling on. Growth from this point forward is rapid.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of an aubergine, or about 34 to 38cm (13 to 15 inches) long and weighing in at between 680 grammes and 1kg (1.5 to 2.2lbs)

His eyes blink constantly now and they even have fully developed eyelashes. He can also see light and react to it. In fact, if a bright light were placed on your belly, your baby would turn his head towards the light. Neurons in his little brain are continuing to develop by the billions as the brain's centres are defined. Your baby's body is now rapidly creating fat that will keep him warm and fill out all those wrinkles in his skin. He currently has about 2 or 3 percent body fat.

Your baby's muscles are constantly working now and muscle tone is increasing. Every movement is like exercise to your baby as he prepares for life outside the womb. He can hold his head up straight now as the neck muscles are more developed. These muscles will continue to develop after birth until at a couple of months old he will finally be able to lift his head.

Your baby's lungs are still immature, but even at this early stage in your pregnancy, his lungs are developed enough that if he were born now, he could survive with medical help.

Pregnancy Tip



You will most likely have your partner with you in the delivery room. You've started your childbirth classes and know what to do. But, you may also want to consider the services of a doula. What is a doula? A doula is a labour assistant who is trained to give the mum and dad support during labour. Even if you and your partner were the top students in your childbirth classes, it's real easy to forget what you have learned when you are in the throes of labour. Studies have shown that women who use the services of a doula have shorter labour and are less likely to use pain medication or need a forceps delivery or caesarean section. (Note that not all hospitals in Ireland are open to having a second birth partner present at delivery – contact your maternity unit to check.)

Your body this week

During week 28 of your pregnancy you may notice that you have to urinate much more frequently than you did in previous weeks. This is because your baby is so much larger now and is pressing against your bladder constantly. Even if your bladder contains a small amount of urine, with the added weight, it may feel like it is about to burst.

At 28 weeks of pregnancy, many doctors will want to see you at least every other week. The visits are pretty standard and include the routine tests that you are already familiar with; weight, blood pressure, urine, the size of your uterus, the baby's heartbeat, and a test for RH factor.

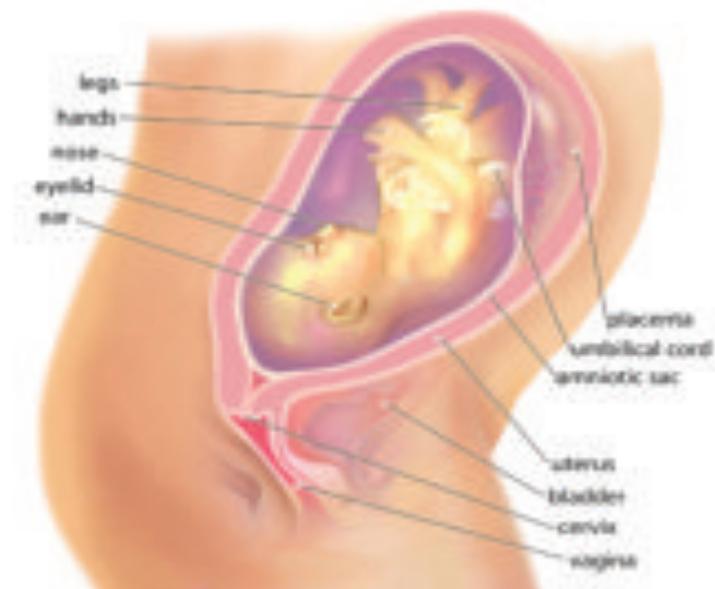
So, what is RH factor? Most doctors will test for RH factor and talk to you about it around now. RH factor (Rhesus factor) is a part of the normal blood testing that you received earlier in your pregnancy. About 85 percent of all women are RH positive, which is indicated by a positive sign (+) and means that their blood type is either A+, B+, or AB+. When a woman is positive (+), or if both the mum and dad are negative (-), there will not be any problems.

Problems can occur when there is RH incompatibility; if the mum is RH negative and the dad is RH positive. If the baby is

RH positive, his blood can mix with yours during delivery and causing you to develop antibodies to protect you. For a first pregnancy, RH incompatibility is not dangerous. However, once a mum develops RH antibodies, future pregnancies are at risk as the RH antibodies can attack the red blood cells of the baby and cause severe anaemia.

If you are at risk, you will be given an RH-immune globulin around the 28 week stage and shortly after you deliver your baby. If you have RH antibodies, you will be monitored closely and your doctor will probably

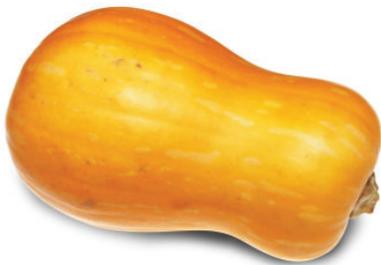
recommend that you have an amniocentesis to test the baby's blood. The condition is easily treatable if caught early advance.



Week 29

Week 29 brings about a vital development for both you and baby. Your baby actually triggers your body to get ready for breastfeeding through an amazing process of hormone development first in your baby and then in your body. You could have a new symptom this week as well.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a squash at about 40cm (16 inches) long and weighing in at between 1.1 to 1.7kg (2.5 to 3.8lbs).

At week 29, your baby has practiced breathing for some time now by inhaling and exhaling amniotic fluid. Now, her brain is developed enough that she can actually control the process of breathing. This means that if she were born now, she would have the natural instinct to breathe on her own. Additionally, your baby now has enough body fat to control her body temperature if she were born early.

All of your baby's senses are quite developed now as well. She has the ability to see and react to light, her taste buds are functioning, she can hear noises from outside the womb, she reacts to touch, and she could even smell if she were born now.

Your baby's bones have been hardening for several months now and are continuing to do so. This process will continue for about 18 months after she is born. For now, her bones are hard at work storing iron, calcium, and phosphorus.

An important development of week 29 is the development of the hormone androgen. Your baby's adrenal glands produce androgen this week. The androgen enters the placenta and triggers your body to start producing estrogen. The estrogen then stimulates your baby to make the hormone prolactin. The hormone prolactin causes your body to produce colostrum. If you decide to breastfeed, colostrum is what your baby will get first. Colostrum is loaded with protein and gives your baby antibodies that will protect her from diseases. The milk will then come in after a couple of days.

Pregnancy Tip



Make sure that you are getting enough iron! Iron is essential during pregnancy. Iron replenishes the red blood cells, keeps up with the demand that is created by the increased volume of blood, and gives your baby iron stores that she needs at birth. If your iron is low, you could develop iron deficiency. Talk to your doctor about your iron level, especially if you are feeling more tired, weakened, or dizzy.

Your body this week

As you enter week 29 of your pregnancy, know that you will probably be putting on about 5 additional kilos (10 pounds) before you deliver. Do not despair! The weight is temporary and necessary for your baby to be born healthy. You've probably already noticed that you are quite clumsy and have a hard time climbing in and out of the car. You may even require help getting up and down already. But, you have to remember, your centre of gravity is not the same now. The weight has changed the way you walk and move.



You feel your baby moving much more this week and some of the movements can even be shocking to you. A foot in the ribs can sometimes take your breath away! It's important to pay attention to your baby's movements. If they seem to decrease, you should sit down and count the number of movement for one hour. There should be at least 10 movements. If not, contact your doctor right away to be safe.

You could also notice that heartburn has become a daily thing now. As your baby gets bigger and bigger, she is pressing on all of your internal organs. Your stomach gets pushed up and the duodenal flap that normally stays closed can be

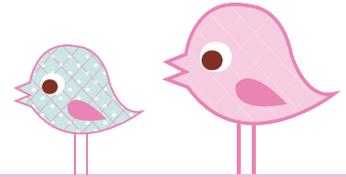
pushed open. This causes heartburn and indigestion. The only way to relieve heartburn and indigestion is to eat smaller more frequent meals, and to use antacids. (You should always consult your doctor before taking any over the counter medications during your pregnancy.)

Because your body is now producing prolactin, your breasts may already have colostrums and could be leaking. If you notice a leak, do not be alarmed. This happens quite often and is nothing to be concerned with. You may have to use nursing pads or gauze placed in your bra.

Week 30

It's now week 30 of your pregnancy and that means that you have begun your 8th month. Only 11 weeks left! It's amazing how quickly it has gone by. There is no doubt that you have a melon for a tummy now and it's much more difficult now to do things like tie your shoes. You are certainly aware of your baby at every move these days.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a squash at about 40cm (16 inches) long and weighing in at between 1.1 to 1.7kg (2.5 to 3.8lbs).

Week 30 also means that your baby is urinating close to a half a litre into the amniotic fluid each day. For male babies, week 30 means that the testicles are fully positioned. For females, the clitoris makes its appearance. In an ultrasound, the clitoris will look rather large. This is because the labia, which are the folds of skin around the clitoris, are not yet developed.

Your baby's head continues to grow and will do so until birth. Her lanugo (the hair that grows all over her body) is starting to shed now that she has enough body fat to help regulate her temperature. Your baby's eyes are opening and closing and she is even looking around. Her bones are continuing to harden and are now responsible for creating red blood cells.

Pregnancy Tip

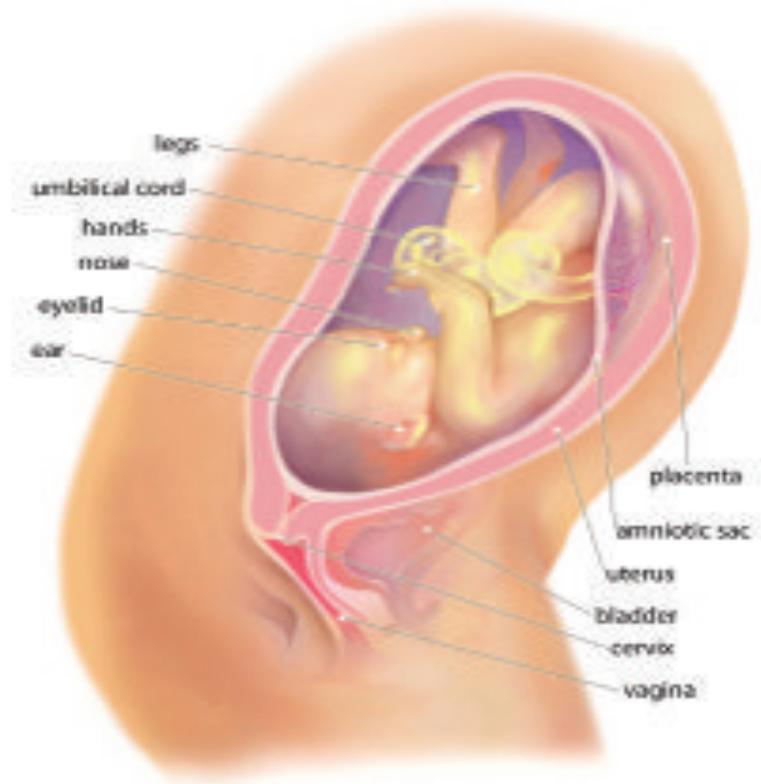


As your belly is getting bigger, you may find that you just cannot find a comfortable position for sleep. Here are some tips:

- Sleep on your left side. This is because your main vena cava vein lies to the right of your spine, so sleeping on the left enables your body to have optimal blood flow.
- Use maternity pillows or body pillows to prop up your abdomen, and to support your back, and upper leg.
- If all else fails, try sleeping in the recliner. Women who have back aches find this works well.

Your body this week

By week 30, most women find that they are getting very restless. Although you may love being pregnant, you are anxious to get it over with. You can't wait till the day comes when you hear your precious little baby cry. You long for the time when you first get to hold her in your arms and kiss her. During these last months, it's a good idea to try to finish up all the projects that have been started in preparation for the baby. It is also a very good time for you and your partner to take some time out for yourselves. After all, it's going to be a long time before you are able to do it again.



As for symptoms of week 30, you are probably still having back aches if you had them previously. You could also notice constipation this week. Just like gas, constipation is caused from the increased level of progesterone in your body. The progesterone makes the digestive system work slower. Combine that with the added weight of the uterus pressing down against the intestines, and you get constipation.

It's recommended that you drink plenty of fluid and get some sort of exercise each day to help prevent constipation. Eat foods that are high in fibre. Vegetables and whole grain foods are a good source. If your constipation is severe or causes a lot of pain, talk to your doctor. There are some over the counter stool softeners that are safe to take during pregnancy.

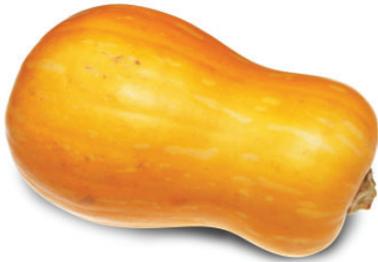
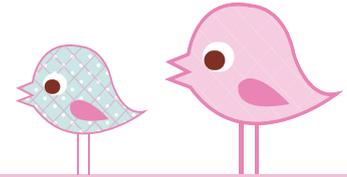
You could also notice the onset

of swelling this week. A certain amount of swelling is normal during the later stages of pregnancy; however, if you notice that you have swelled up overnight, get to your doctor right away as this could be a sign of high blood pressure or preeclampsia.

Week 31

Week 31 is here and you are getting closer to the day when your precious little baby makes his grand entrance into your life. All of his body functions are working now and he is fine tuning a few last developments. Your body is no doubt tired most days now as you carry all that extra weight, but your spirits are high, for you only have a few weeks left now!

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a squash at about 40cm (16 inches) long and weighing in at between 1.1 to 1.7kg (2.5 to 3.8lbs).

If his legs were stretched out he would measure about 41cm (16 inches) long! He is so big!

However, now at week 31, the growth spurt will slow down a bit. Between now and the time your baby is born, he will put on about another kilo (2 more pounds).

Your baby's brain is in its final stages of development, connecting nerve cells at a rapid pace. His lungs are much more mature at 31 weeks gestation as is his digestive tract, which is functioning daily just as it would if he were born. Additionally, his testes continue to descend into their location in the scrotum. Sometimes this process will take the entire pregnancy to complete.

Your baby's layers of fat are continuing to grow. His legs and arms are completely proportionate to his head now. And, speaking of his head, his hair is getting fuller and longer. The hair on his body though (the lanugo) continues to fall off.

Your baby listens to the sound of your voice daily now and can recognise it. By the time he arrives, he will be able to pick your voice out of a crowd. This means that your baby can also hear everything else that goes on in your world, so remember, it's a good time to avoid commotion. Try to keep your atmosphere peaceful and calming.

Pregnancy Tip



For many pregnant women, an unfortunate side-effect can appear in the third trimester – haemorrhoids. The added weight presses on the haemorrhoid veins causing swelling and discomfort. Some cases are even bad enough to bleed. To prevent haemorrhoids during these last few weeks, it is important to keep up your daily exercise and eat more food rich in fibre.

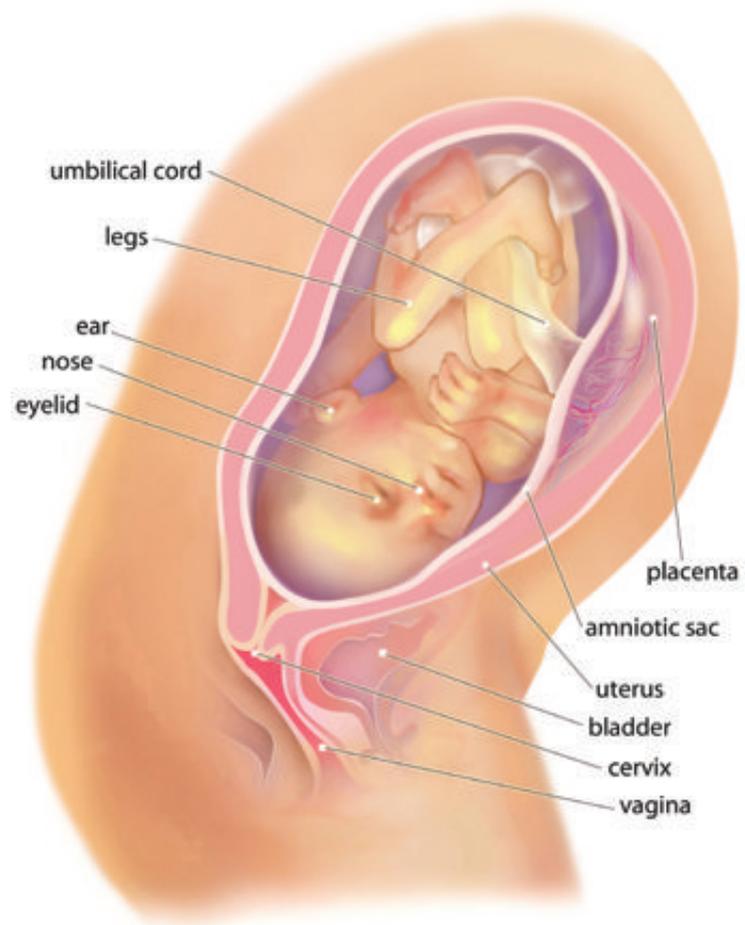
If additional help is required, take warm baths and talk to your doctor about medication.

Your body this week

Week 31 is here and you are probably feeling huge now! No worries... remember, it won't be long now. As your weight increases more and more each week, your backaches may worsen. The ligaments and muscles that hold your stomach in place are stretched and getting looser in anticipation of your body going into labour. If your backaches are severe or debilitating, try to wear a pregnancy girdle. You can get them at just about any maternity boutique. Some women say they are very helpful in holding up the abdomen and giving the ligaments and muscles a break. Naturally, if the pain from your backaches is too severe, you should see your doctor.

Your prenatal visit should take place around 31 weeks. During this visit, your doctor will do the usual checks; weight, blood pressure, measure your uterus, check your urine, and listen to the baby's heart rate.

Your weight should be about 9kg (19 pounds) heavier than your pre-pregnancy weight. Your blood pressure should remain normal. Any changes could indicate high blood pressure or preeclampsia. Urine tests can show if there is



an infection, a high sugar level, or protein. Sugar can indicate gestational diabetes and protein can indicate high blood pressure.

Your uterus at 31 weeks should be located about 8 to 10 cm (3 to 4 inches) below the centre of your ribcage. (When your doctor checks your uterus now, he will also be able to tell if the baby has turned head down yet.)

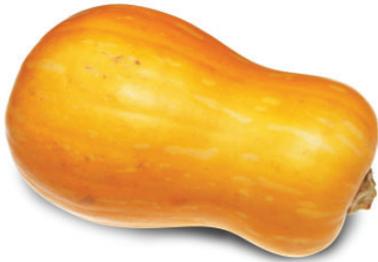
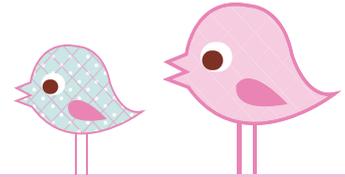
The doctor will also listen to the baby's heart to measure the rate and check for other abnormalities.

You could notice a new symptom again this week – breathlessness. Being short of breath is a common occurrence in the later stages of pregnancy and is usually nothing to be concerned about. The breathlessness occurs because your baby is pressing against your lungs making it feel like breathing is laboured. When this happens, just change positions and you will probably notice that it stops. However, if you cannot get this feeling to stop, contact your doctor.

Week 32

At week 32 of your pregnancy your baby is continuing to make preparations to exist in the outside world. She is much bigger this week and her growing body could start to cause you to have some rather annoying symptoms in your last few weeks of pregnancy.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a squash at about 40cm (16 inches) long and weighing in at between 1.1 to 1.7kg (2.5 to 3.8lbs).

She is getting so big that she does not have much room to move around anymore. As she kicks and wiggles now, you may not feel the movements as

much as you did in the last few weeks. If you are concerned, do kick counts. Ten kicks per hour are considered normal and less than ten kicks in two hours is not normal. If you feel less than ten kicks in two hours, contact your doctor right away.

In week 32, your baby is continuing to add layers of fat beneath her skin. Her internal organs are functioning daily and practicing for that big day. At this time, all of her senses are fully functional. She can see light, she can hear your voice, and she can feel and react to your touch. Her sense of smell and taste are also functioning at this time.

The bones of your baby's little body are now mostly hardened. Her skull, however, will be less hard in order to make delivery easier. The skull is made up of several plates that have soft spots between them. These soft spots are called fontanelles. The fontanelles allow the plates to flex during birth, allowing the baby's large head to fit through the birth canal easier. After birth, your baby's skull plates will realign and the process of ossification, or hardening, will continue until your child is around 2 years of age. At that time, the fontanelles will be closed.

Pregnancy Tip



As your pregnancy progresses, you may want to think about taking a tour of the hospital where you are going to deliver. On your tour, make sure to ask the following questions:

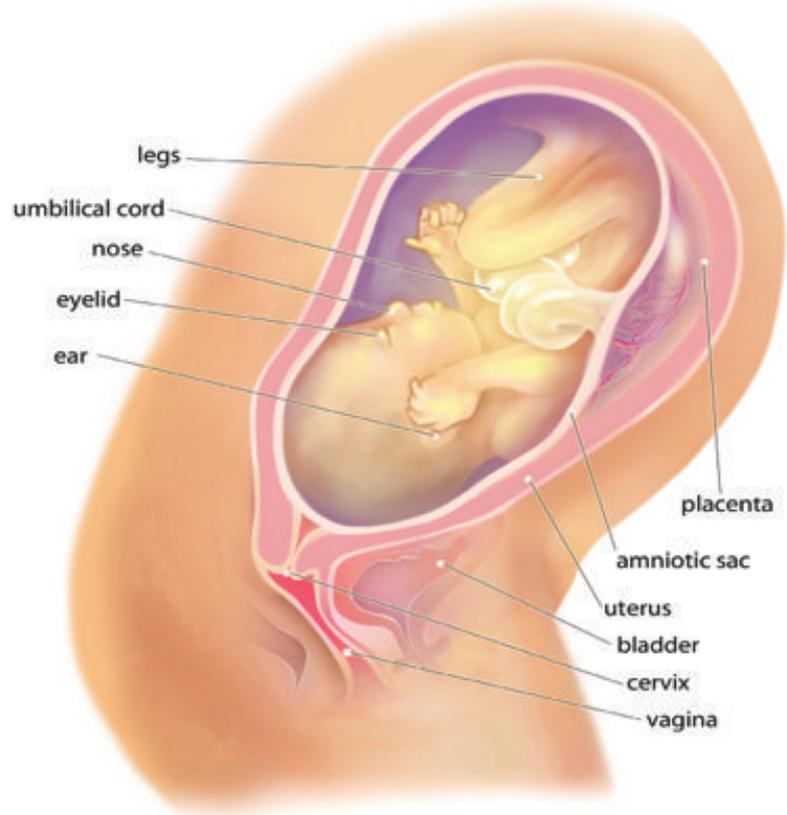
- Is there any paperwork required that you can fill out before you arrive?
- Where should you park and where should you go?
- What is available to help you get through your labour? (exercise balls, DVD players, stereos, televisions, etc.)
- Is there a lactation nurse available once your baby is born?
- Can you view the labour and delivery rooms?

Your body this week

In week 32 of your pregnancy, the top of your uterus is now about 13cm (5 inches) higher than your belly button. Your internal organs are being pushed aside to make room for your baby. This could cause more intense heartburn and constipation from now until you deliver.

As the uterus pushes your stomach up, the duodenal flap that normally stays closed could be pushed open. This causes the heartburn. To minimize heartburn, you should try to eat smaller, more frequent meals and avoid some of the things that make heartburn worse. Spaghetti sauce and pizza are known culprits. You can also take antacids but it is recommended that you talk to your doctor first.

Constipation can get worse and the level of progesterone in your body increases. If you are plagued with constipation, drink lots of fluids and make sure that your diet includes fibre. If your bowel movements are too painful, talk to your doctor. He can recommend stool softeners that would be safe to take during your pregnancy. Stool softeners should be used sparingly as your body can actually become reliant on them.



Some other symptoms that you may be continuing to experience this week are indigestion, breathlessness, and fluid retention. If you are experiencing fluid retention, you should know the signs of preeclampsia and know what to do if you recognise them.

Preeclampsia is a condition in which the mum's blood pressure rises to a dangerous level. The cause of preeclampsia is not known, although it is most common during first pregnancies. Preeclampsia occurs in approximately 3 to 4 percent of all pregnancies and it is the number one

reason for low birth weight, premature birth, and still birth. When preeclampsia advances it becomes eclampsia which can lead to seizures, coma, and even death if not treated. The signs of preeclampsia are high blood pressure, swelling of the hands and face, weight gain that is rapid and abnormal, and protein in the urine. There could also be vision problems, pain in the abdomen, and headaches. If you notice any of these symptoms, contact your doctor right away.

Week 33

Week 33 is here! Only 8 weeks to go! By now, you have probably gained about 22 to 28 pounds, and will continue to gain about ½ kilo (a pound) each week until you deliver. Your baby at 33 weeks has probably moved into the head down position required for delivery.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of an honeydew melon at about 43-48cm and weighing between 1.9 and 2.6kg (4.2 to 5.8lbs).

In the following weeks, your baby will gain about a ¼ kilo (half a pound) per week. He has more than likely turned to the birth position – head down – and is getting ready for his delivery.

Your baby is practicing to breathe by inhaling and exhaling small amounts of amniotic fluid. This exercises his lungs and also produces pulmonary surfactant which will keep his lungs from collapsing when he takes his first breath. In fact, if it were necessary to have an amniocentesis late in your pregnancy, the level of surfactant in the amniotic fluid is measured to determine the maturity of the baby's lungs.

At 33 weeks, your baby probably has a full head of hair now. His sleep patterns have been set for some time now. Usually, when you are active during the day, your baby is sleeping. When you are still at night, your baby is active - you have probably already noticed this! At this stage in your pregnancy, it is believed that a baby even has dreams during sleep. Rapid eye movements (REM) have been documented in 33 week old foetuses. Your baby has been able to see light for some time now and the pupils of his eyes dilate and constrict. He is listening to the world around him and can feel your touch. Fat continues to develop and his skin is now turning pink.

Pregnancy Tip



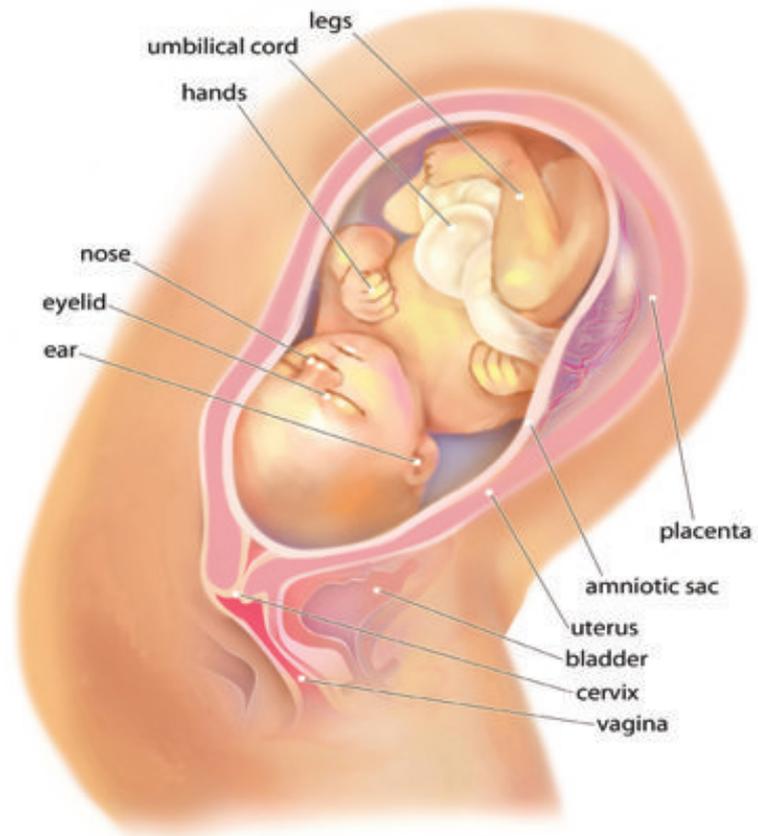
Even at this later stage in your pregnancy calcium remains an important part of your daily diet. As your baby uses calcium from your body to harden his or her bones, it's very easy for your body to become deprived of calcium, causing your bones and teeth to weaken. Make sure to consume plenty of calcium rich foods like low fat milk and cheese.

Your body this week

During week 33, you might start to notice that your maternity clothes are now getting a little tight. You have gained about 22 to 28 pounds now and still have a bit to go. Don't worry too much about it. Just get some baggy sweat pants and big t-shirts. After all, you only have a few weeks left! You may also notice that the weight gain has caused your belly button to pop out. If this has not happened yet, it will soon. This too will go away once you deliver your baby.

As for symptoms, in week 33 you will have most of the same symptoms as you have had in the last couple of weeks. You could feel more tired now with the weight gain and you are probably experiencing shortness of breath due to the baby pressing up on your lungs. Pain in the pelvic area is common as the weight stretches your abdominal and back muscles and ligaments.

You could start to have Braxton Hicks contractions at this time. Braxton Hicks contractions usually occur during the last month of pregnancy.



Some believe that these little contractions are the body's way of practicing for labour. Braxton Hicks contractions are small sporadic contractions of the uterus. These contractions are not painful, they do not get stronger or closer together, and they are usually only felt in the front of the abdomen. When you experience Braxton Hicks contractions, your cervix does not dilate or get thin as it does during normal labour.

Although Braxton Hicks contractions are not painful, they can be annoying. To relieve Braxton Hicks contractions, get moving. Just changing positions or going for a walk will sometimes make the Braxton Hicks contractions subside. Others say that a warm bath or a cup of warm tea will make the contractions go away.

Week 34

It's now week 34 and your baby is filling up your abdomen more and more each day. You are probably feeling a bit anxious now as you get closer to the final weeks and time may be starting to go very slowly. It won't be long now until your baby drops down into your pelvis as she prepares to make her grand entrance into the world.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of an honeydew melon.

Your baby is continuing to gain weight and grow in length during week 34. The details are not changing much now as your baby is for the most part, fully developed. In week 34, she

weighs in at around 2.1 kilos (4.7 pounds) and measures close to 32cm (12 ½ inches) from crown to rump. If she were to stretch out her legs, the length would be closer to about 47cm (18.5 inches) long! (This is an average length and weight. Naturally, some babies are much smaller or larger depending on many factors. Even the measurements that your doctor takes on your belly are not exact - only ultrasound measurements can come close to the real size and weight of your baby.)

When an ultrasound is done, your baby is measured in several areas. The most common measurements are the circumference of the head, the circumference of the abdomen, and the length of the femur. At 34 weeks into your pregnancy, the circumference of your baby's head is about 30cm (12 inches). The length of the femur bone is about 7cm (2.75 inches), and the abdomen circumference is about 30cm (12 inches). Your baby's hair is continuing to grow on her head, but the lanugo (the fine hair on her body) is shedding more every day. Your baby's fingernails are past the tips of her fingers now and she can even scratch herself.

Pregnancy Tip



If you are prone to pregnancy heartburn during your later months of pregnancy, try using pillows to prop yourself up a bit when you sleep. The goal is to get your upper body raised above your stomach. Also, change your meals to several smaller meals per day instead of three large meals. This will aid your digestion. If you need to take medication, talk to your doctor about what over the counter medicines are safe for you.

Your body this week

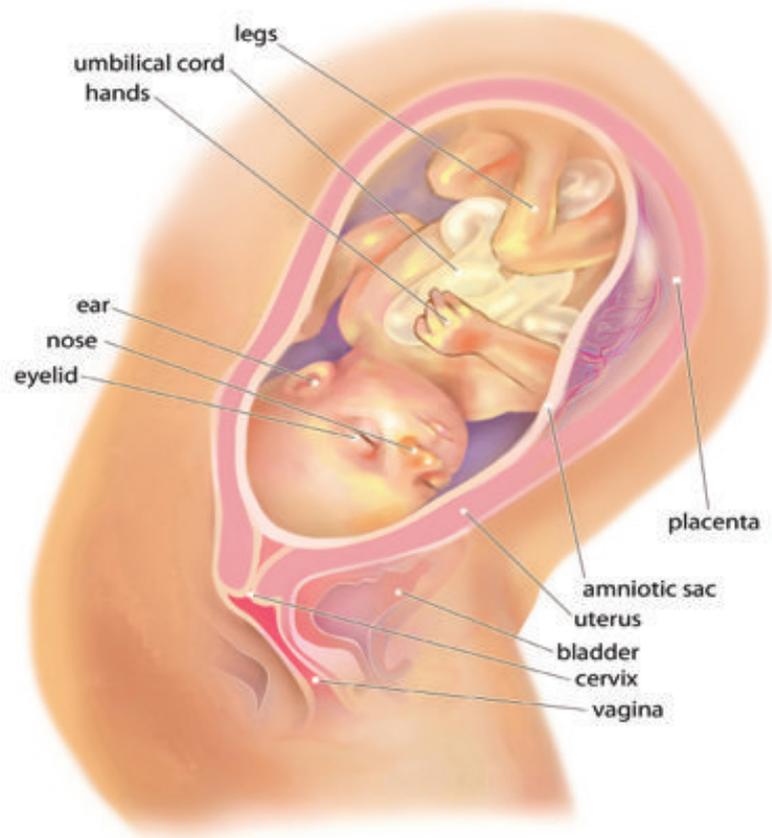
So, how is mum this week? Well, time may be going slow for you now. You are anxious to see your baby, but a bit apprehensive as well. Your symptoms in the last couple of months have been challenging and you are probably even dreaming nightly about having your baby.

Shortness of breath continues as your baby presses on your diaphragm and lungs. The good news is that this symptom should decrease as your baby drops lower into your pelvis in preparation for delivery.

Around this time in a pregnancy, many women find out that they must have a caesarean section (C-section). There are a multitude of reasons that this happens. Whenever a condition poses a risk to mum or baby during vaginal delivery, a C-section can be indicated. It is also common for the mum to have a c-section after attempting to deliver vaginally. Occasionally, the labour will progress too slowly. The contractions may not be strong enough to deliver a baby and the cervix may not be soft enough to dilate. This is called dystocia and can be corrected with medication

called oxytocin. Doctors will usually try this medication before suggesting a C-section be performed. Additionally, if the baby shows any signs of distress during labour, such as low heart rate, a C-section may become necessary.

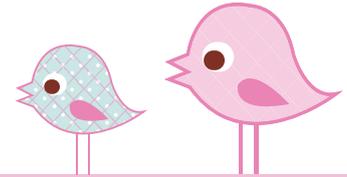
Though natural delivery is always best, a C-section is next best. You should also note that some doctors are more likely to suggest C-section than others. If you have been told you need to have a C-section, make sure to do your research and ask your doctor lots of questions.



Week 35

As you enter week 35 of your pregnancy you may notice you are more anxious about the impending birth of your baby. One minute you could be excited and the next minute you may be scared to death; especially if you are a first time mum. Your baby is probably not frightened, but he surely is anxious to meet you and see his new world!

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of an honeydew melon.

At 35 weeks, your baby now weighs about 2 ½ kilos (5 ½ pounds) and measures around 33cm (13 inches) from rump to crown. His legs are stronger now as well as his arms. You

probably can tell by the strength he has in his kicks and punches! Your baby's eyes are more than likely blue in colour as most newborns have blue eyes, but they may well change colour after birth.

By week 35, your little boy's testes have now completed their decent into the scrotum. He has a full head of hair, or at least he has as much as he is supposed to have. Some babies are born with only fuzz while others almost need a trim at birth!

The fat that has been developing for several months now has filled out most of the wrinkles in your baby's skin, which is now pink instead of red. The lanugo (the fine hair covering the body) continues to fall off and should be completely gone by birth. His lungs are much more mature now with just a couple of weeks to go. In fact, a baby born at 35 weeks would be considered pre-term, instead of premature. This is because most babies that are 35 weeks gestation can breathe without the need of medical help.

Your baby has now found his way to the proper birth position as well. His head is down against the pubic bone and he will stay this way until delivery. Occasionally, a baby will not turn to the head down position. This is called 'breech' and usually occurs in premature births of 32 weeks gestation or less. When a mum is in labour, an ultrasound or the doctor feeling the uterus can determine if the baby is in the breech position. If this is the case, there are methods that are used to actually turn the baby in the womb, before he starts to enter the birth canal. If not successful, a caesarean section will usually be required.

Pregnancy Tip



As you gain weight and get closer to your delivery date, you may notice that the hot flushes you experienced early on in your pregnancy are back. If you are bothered by pregnancy hot flushes, dress in layers of comfortable clothing. It's easier to remove a sweater than it is to try to cool down when you are wearing too many clothes. And, if you can, make sure that your clothing is cotton so it can breathe. Keep a fan close by and if you have access to a swimming pool, take advantage of it.

Your body this week

During week 35 of your pregnancy, you will notice that you have gained about 24 to 29 pounds and have an overall feeling of being physically uncomfortable. Not to worry... This is expected. The last few weeks are the most difficult time.

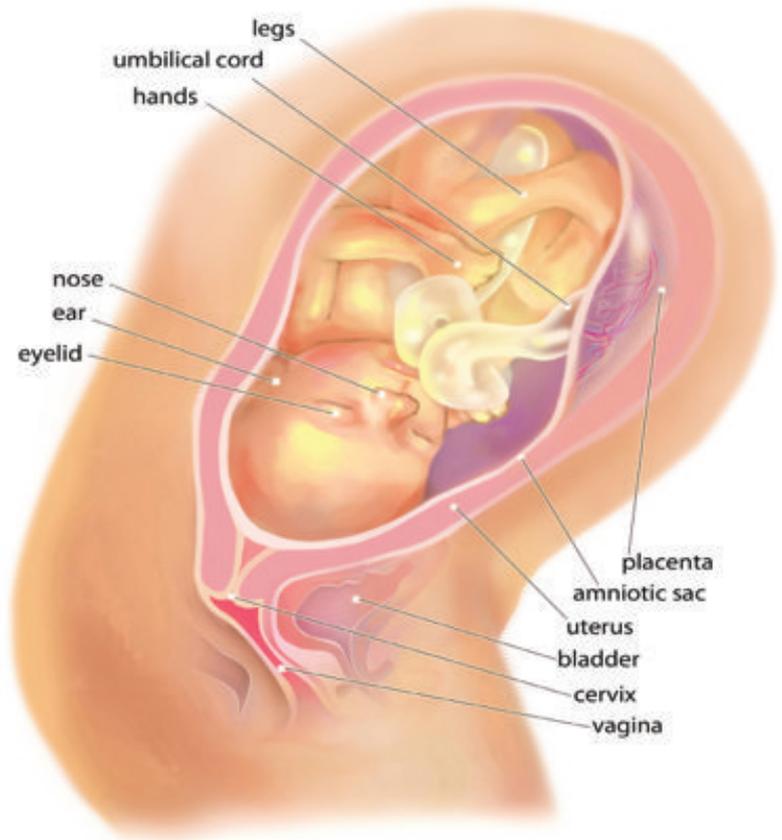
Your symptoms in the 35th week continue; fatigue, moodiness, backache, indigestion, etc. However, there may be a new symptom at this time. Anxiety might rear its ugly head. This is natural. As you get closer to your delivery date, you are going to be anxious. Take some deep breaths and talk to your partner or a friend.

You also could be experiencing more difficulty with haemorrhoids now. As your pregnancy progresses and your uterus grows, the pressure on your intestines increases. Combine that with the high level of progesterone in your body causing your food to digest slower, and you have constipation. So, in addition to the weight of the baby causing pressure on the veins of the rectum, the constipation causes you strain during bowel movements, making haemorrhoids even worse.

To avoid constipation make sure to drink plenty of fluids and eat whole grains, leafy green vegetables, and fruits. Getting some daily exercise also helps. If you must use a stool softener or laxative, talk to your doctor first to find out what is safe to take during pregnancy.

Another issue you could be having this week has to do with your sex drive. If you remember, in your first trimester, you were more than likely not interested in sex at all. You were having morning sickness and odd feelings. Then, as if lightning

struck, your libido was in full swing in your second trimester. That was understandable. Your nausea was gone and you had more energy. Now that you are this close to your delivery date, you may find that your sex drive has again gone into hiding. These changes are entirely normal and just part of a typical pregnancy.



Week 36

You've made it to week 36 and from here on in, you will be on labour alert. It is not uncommon to start after 36 weeks, so you should be prepared for labour just in case. If you were to go into labour and delivery now, your baby is fully developed and may only require some minor medical intervention.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of an honeydew melon.

In week 36 of your pregnancy, your baby now weighs about 2.6 kilos (5.8 pounds) and may measure up to 48cm (19 inches)

long from head to toe. At this point in your pregnancy, all your little baby has to do is continue to gain weight. All internal organs are fully developed and functional, and your baby could survive with little need for medical help if she were born now.

Your baby is still practicing to breathe by inhaling and exhaling small amounts of amniotic fluid. She also continues to swallow some of the amniotic fluid and produce urine which is filtered through the amniotic sac.

As your body prepares for labour, so does your baby. She has taken her proper position – head down – in the womb and is starting to descend into the pelvic region. This is referred to as 'lightening'. Some babies will begin lightening around week 36. Others may not take their place lower in the pelvis until right before labour. Therefore, lightening cannot be used to determine the onset of labour.

There are a couple of theories on how labour actually begins. Many experts believe that your baby will actually send a signal to your body when it is time to start labour. This theory states that a baby's brain will signal the foetal adrenal glands causing hormone production that stimulates a rush of progesterone and estrogen, causing labour to start. Other experts believe that signal comes from the baby's lungs, causing the production of hormones. These hormones trigger the release of the enzyme prostaglandin, which causes cervix to soften and contractions to begin. These are only theories and to date have not been proven. Either way, the process of beginning labour is incredibly amazing and wondrous!

Pregnancy Tip



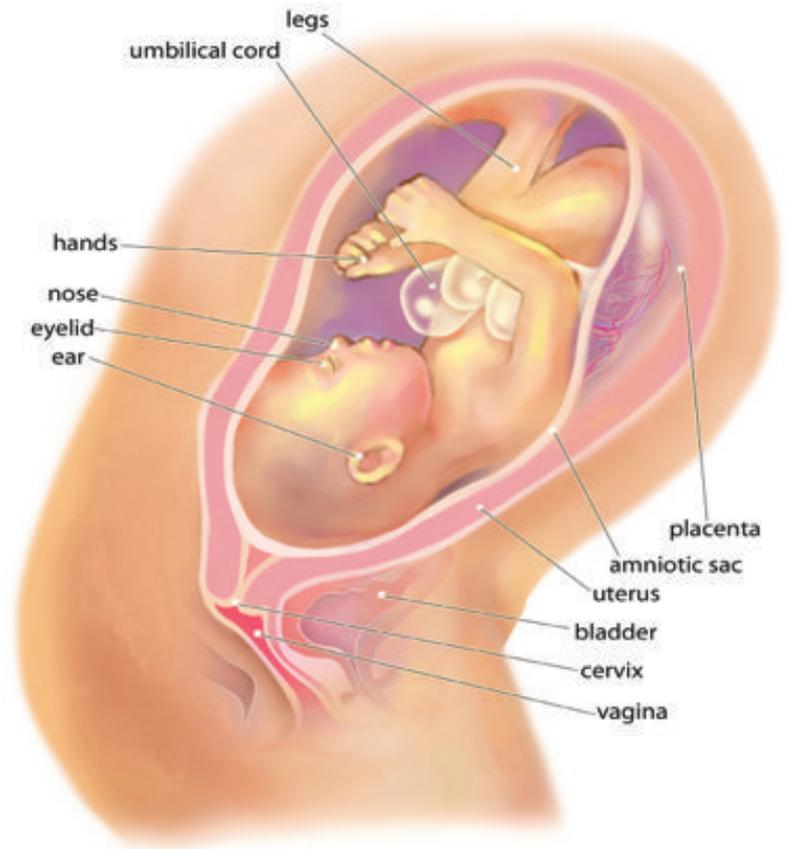
If you have not already done so, now is the time to write out a birth plan. Include all the information pertaining to your delivery; where you want to go when you are in labour, who will be allowed to be in the room with you, what medications you want to be offered, positions that you want to use during labour. You can even use the birth plan to document your wishes for your baby's first bath, vaccinations, and feeding. Make sure that everyone involved in the birth has a copy to refer to.

Your body this week

In week 36, you may notice that your energy level is fluctuating dramatically. You could find that you are totally exhausted in the morning, but full of energy in the evening. Take advantage of those small bursts of energy. Complete all those little pending projects and tasks that are needed before you bring your baby home.

At this stage in your pregnancy, you may experience swelling in your ankles, feet, hands, and face. A certain amount of swelling is normal and should be expected; however, if you experience swelling that is rapid and unusual, or is combined with a headache or blurred vision, contact your doctor right away. It could be a sign of high blood pressure or even preeclampsia; a serious condition that requires medical attention immediately.

At week 36, you could find it hard to eat a normal sized meal. There is just no room in your belly! Eating smaller more frequent meals will help. If your baby has already begun to drop down into the pelvis (the 'lightening'), you could notice that you have less



heartburn and it's a bit easier to breathe. However, with this new development come new symptoms: as your baby drops, there is increased pressure on the lower part of your abdomen. You might find that walking is now difficult and you feel the need to urinate all the time. If the baby is extremely low, you might feel inner pressure on your vaginal area that can be uncomfortable.

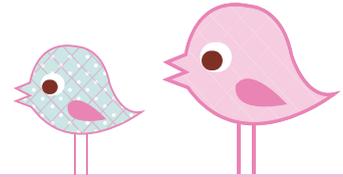
If you have not yet had them, Braxton Hicks contractions are

probably in your near future. Braxton Hicks contractions are small uterine contractions that do not affect the cervix. Some say they are your body's way of practicing for labour. If you experience Braxton Hicks contractions, watch for true signs of labour such as losing your mucus plug, your water breaking, and contractions becoming longer, stronger, and closer together and do not ease up at all.

Week 37

It's week 37 of your pregnancy and you only have 4 weeks until you can finally meet your sweet little baby! It's an exciting and busy time. Your baby is ready now. In fact, she may decide to drop down into the birth canal this week.

Your baby this week



Holy cow! Your baby is now around the size of a watermelon.

In the 37th week of your pregnancy, your baby is now considered mature. She weighs close to 3kg (6½ pounds) and is gaining fat quite rapidly. In the last couple of weeks of

pregnancy, babies gain on the average of ½ ounce of fat per day. Crown to rump measurements this week are about 35cm (14 inches).

As for foetal development in week 37, your baby remains in the fat developing stage and is gaining about ½ ounce per day, she is much pinker now and her skin has lost its translucency. The wrinkles in her skin are now mostly filled in with fat. By the time she is born, the only wrinkles she will have will be ones that are caused from fat!

Your baby is also continuing to practice breathing movements and the digestion process. She inhales and exhales amniotic fluid, as well as swallows and digests amniotic fluid. The lanugo (the fine hair covering the body) continues to fall off and should be completely gone by birth.

Your baby's lungs are very mature at this point. In fact if your baby were born now, she would more than likely breathe on her own with no medical assistance. Additionally, your baby has now turned to position herself for birth. Her head is facing down and she is pressing against the pubic bone.

Pregnancy Tip



At this stage in your pregnancy, you should have a bag ready to go when labour starts. If possible, pack one bag for you and one for baby. Here are a few recommendations:

Mum's Bag

- A camera
- Socks, robe, slippers, underwear, and 2 nightgowns
- Clothes to go home in
- Shoes (flats are best)
- (If breastfeeding) a nursing bra and nipple cream
- Sanitary napkins and toiletries
- Your address book (so you can contact everyone after delivery)

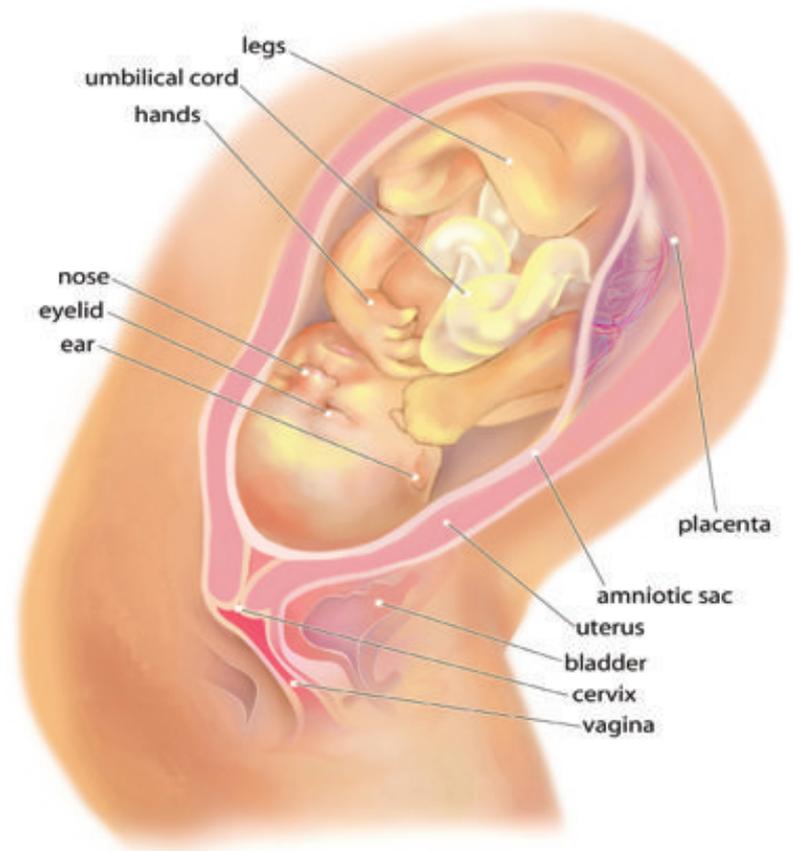
Baby's Bag

- An outfit to go home in
- Newborn-size nappies
- Undershirts (not onesies, your baby's belly button cannot be covered yet)
- Baby blankets

Your body this week

In the 37th week of your pregnancy, your feelings of anxiousness are probably peaking. It's so close that you just can't wait! And for some mums, that is exactly the case. Labour can start this early. The cervix usually starts to soften around this time as it prepares for labour. So, if you notice a slight discharge that is thick, yellowish, and possibly tinged with blood, it is more than likely your mucus plug. The mucus plug serves to protect the uterus from infection during your pregnancy. As your cervix begins to soften, the plug is discharged. This can happen several weeks before delivery, or just hours before you go into labour. If you do notice a discharge of any kind, make sure to mention it to your doctor.

This week, you could also be noticing that your breasts feel fuller and heavier than ever. Over the last several weeks, the hormones in your body have caused your breasts to start preparing to breast feed. They could also be tender now, so make sure to wear a supportive bra.



If you notice a leakage from your breasts at this time, don't panic. This is the colostrum which is the first milk for your baby. It is yellowy thick milk that contains antibodies that will protect your baby from becoming sick. If leakage is bad, you can purchase nursing pads that you place inside of your bra.

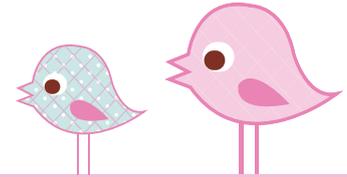
If you plan on breastfeeding, it is recommended that you only wash your nipples with water.

You should start this practice now. Do not use soap as it is too drying on the skin. There are some heavy creams on the market that are meant for use on the nipple and are safe for breastfeeding mums. In anticipation of the dry, cracked skin that can come from breastfeeding, you may want to start using a cream now to moisturize the skin.

Week 38

Congratulations! You and your baby have made it to week 38 which is considered 'full-term'. This means that if you were to go into labour now and give birth, your baby would be considered fully mature and would be just fine. At this time in a woman's pregnancy, she usually will let out a sigh of relief knowing that her baby will be born very soon.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a watermelon.

In these final days of your pregnancy, your baby is now getting ready to meet his mum and dad. In week 38, your baby now weighs close to 3.2 kg (7 pounds) and measures from 48 to 53cm (19 to 21 inches) in

length. (This is only an average length and weight. Naturally, some babies are much smaller or larger depending on many factors. Even the measurements that your doctor takes on your belly are not exact – only ultrasound measurements can come close to the real size and weight. But, for the most part, these weekly average measurements give you an idea of your baby's size.)

During week 38, your baby's head and abdomen are about the same size as last week but he is continuing to gain about an ounce per day. Your baby is also continuing to produce meconium in his intestines. Meconium is the substance that collects in the intestines while the baby is in the uterus. As the baby swallows amniotic fluid, the tiny particles of lanugo (the little hair that covers the baby's body to keep his temperature regulated), bile, and cells shed from his skin are ingested. These contents form meconium, which is the baby's first bowel movement. Meconium is a sticky, green and black coloured substance that is very thick. A baby's bowel movements in the first few days will be meconium and then will change to yellowish or green stools.

In week 38, like the rest of his body, your baby's sexual organs are fully formed and functioning. For boys, the testes have made their decent into the scrotum and for girls, the labia is fully developed.

Pregnancy Tip



Food after giving birth may be the last thing on your mind but it's worth thinking about now while you have the time. There is nearly zero chance of coming home and creating gourmet meals in those first postpartum weeks. Any spare time you do have will be used to run to the shower, brush your nest like hair or run with a load of washing to the washing machine. Even getting to the toilet can be a luxury.

So either get cooking and freezing now or head to the supermarket and stock up on some good quality ready meals or maybe do a mixture of both. Good things to freeze include soups, stews and casseroles. Alternatively if this is all a step too far right now, put your favourite takeouts on speed dial.

Your body this week

Now that you are so close to your due date, you should know what to expect over the next couple of weeks. Most women do not deliver very close to their due dates. In fact, about 88 percent of all babies are born within a two week window of the due date. So, it's a good idea to get familiar with the signs and symptoms of labour.

Labour typically has three stages; pre-labour, false labour, and real labour.

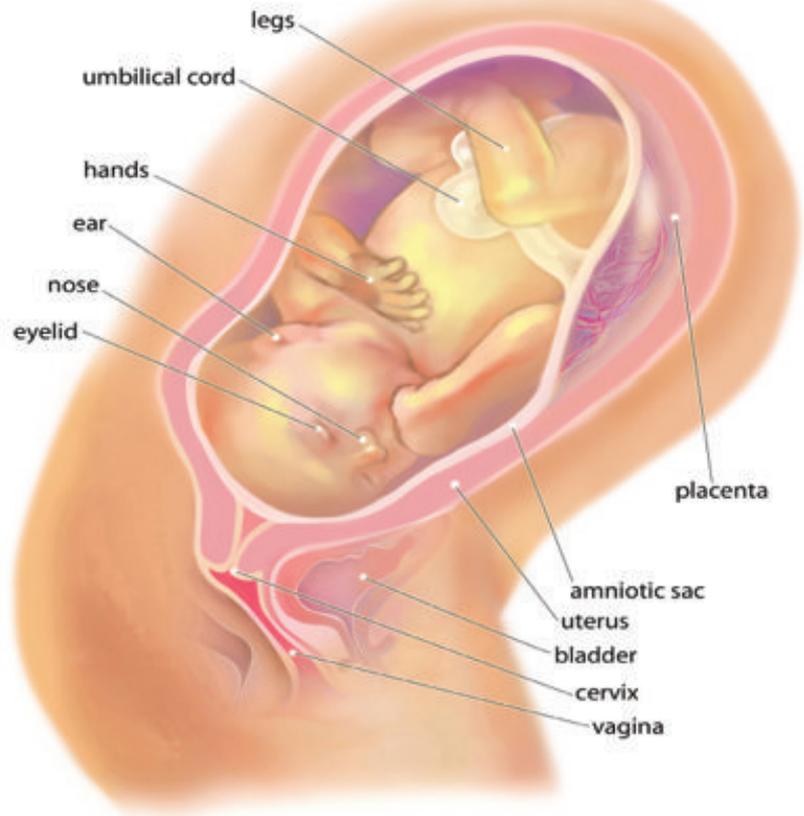
Pre-labour is the period of time that your body is preparing to give birth. During this time, your baby will drop into the pelvic area (also known as 'lightening'). You could also have a vaginal discharge that has a brown or blood tint to it (this is the loss of your mucus plug). Braxton Hicks contractions are more frequent, and the nesting instinct is in full force.

False labour occurs when Braxton Hicks contractions are intense enough that it begins to feel like labour. Braxton Hicks contractions differ from real labour in that they are only felt in the front of the abdomen

and not the back. Additionally, Braxton Hicks contractions do not get closer together and they can usually be alleviated by moving around. The biggest difference between Braxton Hicks contractions and real labour is that your cervix does not soften or dilate.

Real labour will include all the pre-labour signs in addition to your water breaking and contractions that get closer together and become more painful with each episode. The

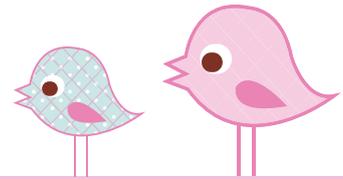
intensity of the contraction is noticeably different as labour progresses. The pain will normally start in the lower back and then move to the abdomen. When you move around, it hurts more, unlike Braxton Hicks contractions which are lessened with movement. And, during real labour, the cervix softens and dilates.



Week 39

Wow! It's getting close now! Only two weeks left until you get to meet your beautiful little baby. There's no doubt that you are quite anxious now. Your baby is certainly ready. She is running out of room in there and will soon make her grand entrance in the world.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a watermelon.

At 39 weeks into your pregnancy, your baby is considered full-term. She probably weighs somewhere around 3.2 and 3.4kg (7 and 7.5 pounds) and measures from

48 to 53cm (19.5 to 21.5 inches) from the top of her head to the tips of her toes. (Of course, these weights and measurements are only averages. Some babies are much smaller or larger depending on many factors. Even the measurements that your doctor takes on your belly are not exact - only ultrasound measurements can come close to the real size and weight. But, for the most part, these weekly average measurements give you a good indication of your baby's size.

In week 39, your baby is probably not moving around as much as she did over the last several weeks. There is no room left for her to do so! However, you should still notice some movement. If you do not, contact your doctor right away.

As for development in week 39, your baby is fully developed. All internal organs are functioning and fine details like eyelashes, fingernails, and hair are all in place now. At this point, your baby is just sitting in your womb and gaining weight. Her fingernails and toenails are grown to the tip of her toes and fingers and at this point, your baby can even scratch herself inside the womb. Her hair pattern is complete and she may even be born with a full head of hair. Some babies only have a bit of fuzz while others are born needing a trim! It all depends on her genetics.

All the muscles in your baby's body are getting stronger by the day. She is also continuing to practice breathing movements by inhaling and exhaling amniotic fluid.

The lanugo (the fine hair covering your baby) is still falling off and will do so up until delivery. The protective coating that covered your baby and protected her from the harshness of the amniotic fluid (vernix caseosa) is also shedding as she prepares for birth.

Pregnancy Tip



As you know, labour can last for hours. Unfortunately, many women do not get any nourishment during that time because food makes them nauseated. Without the food, their energy level plummets at the time when they need all the energy they can get.

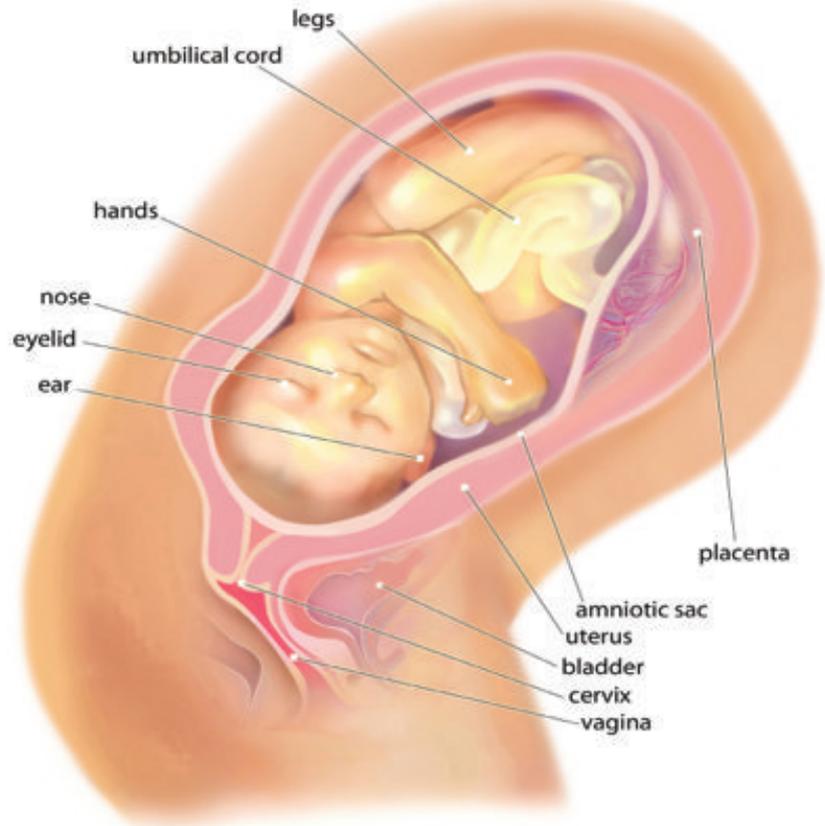
It's a good idea to try to eat something early on in the labour so that you have energy. Choose foods that are easy on your stomach and have carbohydrates like pasta and grains. And, because dehydration is known to slow down labour, make sure to drink plenty of water when you are in the delivery room.

Your body this week

At 39 weeks into your pregnancy, you are more than likely ready to have a baby. You may be feeling clumsy and much more tired now. The weight gain is definitely slowing you down. And, you are probably still having some of the late pregnancy symptoms like constipation, bladder pressure, trouble sleeping, haemorrhoids, heartburn, varicose veins, pelvic pain, leg cramps, Braxton Hicks contractions, and swelling.

Remember that some swelling is normal and is to be expected; however, if you notice swelling that appears rapidly (you wake up swollen), or swelling that is accompanied by a headache or blurred vision, contact your doctor immediately.

As you get closer and closer to your due date, you could notice that you lose your mucus plug. The mucus plug is the mucus structure that closed off your uterus, protecting your baby from infection in the womb. The mucus plug could come out at any time from now until right before you go into labour. When you lose the mucus plug, there could be a discharge that is slightly tinted with blood.



Many women wonder what will happen if they were to go past their due dates. Depending on the circumstances, your doctor could induce your labour. If there is any reason to believe that it would be risky to you or your baby if your pregnancy were to continue, labour induction is suggested.

Labour is induced by the doctor by either manually rupturing your membranes (which is equivalent to your water breaking) or by inserting a gel or suppository to stimulate

contractions and soften the cervix for dilation. An intravenous drug is also given to progress the contractions. After that, it's just a matter of time.

Week 40

You have made it to week 40, and if you have not already started labour, you will very soon! Most women start labour within one week of their due date. In fact, only about 5 percent of all babies are born in the week of their due dates.

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a watermelon.

During week 40 of your pregnancy, your baby weighs around 3.4kg (7.5 pounds) and measures somewhere in the vicinity of 51cm (20 inches). (Remember, these weights and measurements are only

averages. All babies are different sizes and lengths depending on many factors. Even the measurements that your doctor takes on your belly are not exact - only ultrasound measurements can come close to the real size and weight. Nevertheless, for the most part, these weekly average measurements give you a good indication of your baby's size.)

Your baby is definitely getting impatient now. You can probably tell by the movements that she is getting pretty cramped in your womb, especially at night when you are trying to sleep. For months now, night-time was the time that your baby would be fairly active. Now that she has no room, her movements can become uncomfortable during the night.

At this stage of your pregnancy, just about all of the vernix (the cheesy substance that covers your baby and protects her from the harsh amniotic fluid) is gone and your baby has close to 15 percent body fat.

Your baby is positioned at the cervix and ready to make the journey into the world. She is just waiting for your body to start the labour process.

During labour, your baby's head will first move into the birth canal as the cervix begins to dilate. Then, during the active labour, when your cervix is fully dilated, the contractions will get stronger and stronger and eventually, along with your pushes, your baby will move through the birth canal and be delivered.

Pregnancy Tip



If you have a family dog, he was probably 'your baby' prior to your pregnancy. When you come home with a new baby that will be getting all the attention, your dog might get pretty jealous. In addition to hurt feelings, your dog will be curious about the baby. Pet experts agree that it is a good idea to send something home that has the baby's scent on it before you get discharged. The little hats that are put on all newborns work well for this. This way, your dog can get used to the scent before he meets your baby.

Your body this week

In this 40th week of your pregnancy, you probably have some very overwhelming feelings at times. It's no wonder. Your hormones are raging in preparation for the birth and you are tired and just ready for this to happen. Don't feel guilty about these feelings. It is natural to have them.

You should probably stick pretty close to home this week, just in case you go into labour. If you do have to go somewhere, put your packed bags in the trunk so they are ready to go. And, many doctors recommend not driving at this time. Besides the fact that it could be dangerous if you were to go into labour while driving, you might not even fit behind the steering wheel now!

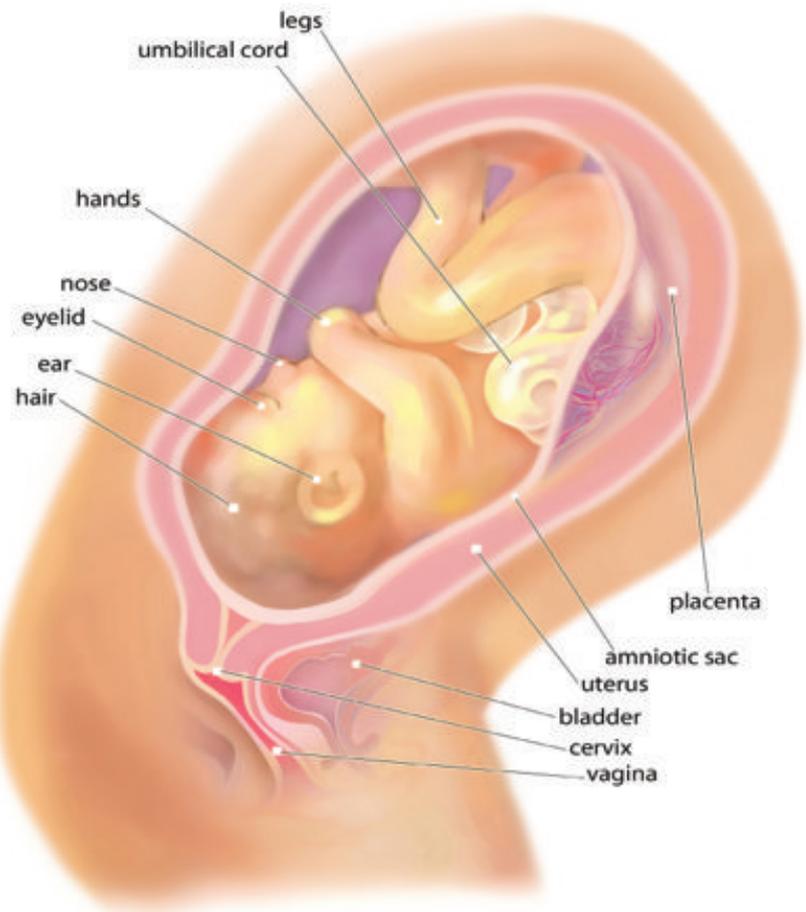
At 40 weeks, you may be having some signs of pre-labour such as Braxton Hicks contractions, a vaginal discharge, or extreme exhaustion. Remember, in true labour, the pain will normally start in the lower back and then move to the abdomen unlike Braxton Hicks contractions which are only felt in the front of the abdomen. Additionally, true labour pains hurt more when you move around, whereas

Braxton Hicks contractions go away when you move around. The best sign that labour is starting is when your water breaks. After that, you should be starting labour soon. If your water breaks, but your labour does not progress, contact your doctor right away.

If you have not yet started to show signs of pre-labour yet, your doctor may recommend that you have a non-stress test. This is a test that is given to make sure that your baby is getting enough oxygen and has a strong heartbeat. They also

will check to make sure that the baby's nervous system is responding correctly.

If it is necessary, your doctor could suggest that your labour be induced. This is usually only in the case that your health or the baby's health is at risk. If you have had a high risk pregnancy due to an illness such as diabetes or other complications which may prohibit you from a natural birth, you may require a caesarean section delivery.



Week 41

Congratulations! You are now in your last week of pregnancy! (At least, it is supposed to be your last week. Occasionally a pregnancy will last a bit longer.) You should pat yourself on the back! You've worked hard to make sure that you had a healthy pregnancy and that you were educated on all aspects of it. You've tracked your progress each week and dreamed of the day that you will finally get to hold your precious baby. Well, that day is just about here!

Your baby this week



Your baby is now around the size of a watermelon.

In this final week of pregnancy, your baby is really getting impatient! She remains cramped and is looking forward to making his grand entrance in the world.

At 41 weeks, your baby measures anywhere around 51cm (20 inches) long when measured from head to toe, and her weight is somewhere in the vicinity of 3.5kg (7 to 8 pounds) on average.

You have probably noticed that your baby has stopped moving around as much as she did in the past weeks. This is because she is simply running out of room. You should still feel movement though. If you do not feel any movement, contact your doctor right away.

Some other foetal developments for this week include the overgrowth of fingernails and toenails. A baby who reaches the full gestation will most likely need her fingernails and toenails trimmed within a few days of birth.

At this point, there may still be a small amount of lanugo hair on her body. This is the fine layer of hair that covers your baby in the womb. The lanugo began to grow several months ago and protected your baby by regulating her body temperature before she had any fat in her body. As the fat began to develop, the lanugo was no longer necessary and started to slough off. By the time she is born, all the lanugo hair should be gone. Occasionally, babies are born with the lanugo hair on their bodies. When this happens, it is only a matter of days until the hair is completely gone.

Your baby has now shed most of the vernix caseosa. This is the cheesy-like coating that covers the foetus in the womb to protect their skin from the harshness of the amniotic fluid. This too will sometimes not be completely gone by birth, but chances are the nurses will clean it off of your baby before you even see it.



Pregnancy Tip

Our only tip in this final week of your pregnancy is to relax and enjoy the miracle that is about to happen!

"A baby is the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, and a dream of possibilities..."

Eda. J Leshan

Your body this week

You've made it to your final week of pregnancy! You are physically ready to give birth and hopefully, you are mentally ready as well.

You've worked hard these nine months to ensure that your pregnancy was healthy. You have also made sure that you were well educated on your baby's development and understood the changes that were happening to your body.

You have certainly been through a myriad of side effects over the last nine months; nausea, leg cramps, constipation, heartburn, indigestion, diarrhoea, haemorrhoids, dry skin, spotty skin, acne, cramps, itching skin, stretch marks, backaches, headaches, swelling, and false labour.

Wow! That is quite a list! Now you face the most painful and trying, but rewarding time; the birth of your precious baby. Take a deep breath and try not to worry. Before you know it, you will be holding your baby and wondering where the time went. And, it is true what they say...Once you see your baby's eyes, you will forget how the pain felt and it will all be only a distant memory.



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