

Feeling your baby move is a sign that they are well

Most women usually begin to feel their baby move between 16 and 24 weeks of pregnancy. A baby's movements can be described as anything from a kick, flutter, swish or roll. The type of movement may change as your pregnancy progresses.



How often should my baby move?

There is no set number of normal movements.

Your baby will have their own pattern of movements that you should get to know.

From 16-24 weeks on you should feel the baby move more and more up until 32 weeks then stay roughly the same until you give birth.



It is **NOT TRUE** that babies move less towards the end of pregnancy.



You should **CONTINUE** to feel your baby move right up to the time you go into labour and whilst you are in labour too.

Get to know your baby's normal pattern of movements.

You must NOT WAIT until the next day to seek advice if you are worried about your baby's movements



If you think your baby's movements have slowed down or stopped, contact your midwife or maternity unit **immediately** (it is staffed 24 hrs, 7 days a week).

- **DO NOT** put off calling until the next day to see what happens.
- Do not worry about phoning, it is **important** for your doctors and midwives to know if your baby's movements have slowed down or stopped.



Why are my baby's movements important?

A reduction in a baby's movements can sometimes be an important warning sign that a baby is unwell. Around half of women who had a stillbirth noticed their baby's movements had slowed down or stopped.



Do not use any hand-held monitors, Dopplers or phone apps to check your baby's heartbeat. Even if you detect a heartbeat, this does not mean your baby is well.

What next? See overleaf

For more information on baby movements talk to your midwife



What if my baby's movements are reduced again?

If, after your check up, you are still not happy with your baby's movement, you must contact either your midwife or maternity unit straight away, even if everything was normal last time.

NEVER HESITATE to contact your midwife or the maternity unit for advice, no matter how many times this happens.

The care you will be given will depend on the stage of your pregnancy:

- **Less than 24 weeks pregnant**

Most women first become aware of their baby moving when they are 18–20 weeks pregnant. If by 24 weeks you have never felt your baby move, you should contact your midwife, who will check your baby's heartbeat. An ultrasound scan may be arranged and you may be referred to a specialist fetal medicine centre to check your baby's wellbeing

- **Between 24 weeks and 28 weeks pregnant**

You should contact your midwife, who will check your baby's heartbeat. You will have a full antenatal check-up that includes checking the size of your uterus, measuring your blood pressure and testing your urine for protein. If your uterus measures smaller than expected, an ultrasound scan may be arranged to check on your baby's growth and development

- **Over 28 weeks pregnant**

You must contact your midwife or local maternity unit immediately. You must not wait until the next day to seek help.

You will be asked about your baby's movements. You will have a full antenatal check-up, including checking your baby's heartbeat.

Your baby's heart rate will be monitored, usually for at least 20 minutes. This should give you reassurance about your baby's wellbeing. You should be able to see your baby's heart rate increase as he or she moves. You will usually be able to go home once you are reassured.



Version 1, published in Jan 2016 under the Tommy's accredited production process (www.tommys.org/informationstandard).
Review date: Jan 2019

CONTACT NUMBERS



The contact number for your midwife can be found on the front of your green pregnancy notes. Otherwise you can ring the community midwives office on 01423 553051

Your local maternity unit contact number is 01423 557531 (Maternity Assessment Unit) or ring Delivery Suite on 01423 553184 if out of hours.

Sources and acknowledgements

The information in this leaflet is based on RCOG Green-top Guideline No. 57 *Reduced Fetal Movements* (2011) and RCOG Patient Information Leaflet *Your baby's movements in pregnancy: information for you* (2012).

Thank you to the following organisations for supporting the development of this leaflet

