

# ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FETAL MOVEMENTS



Getting a peek into your baby's world before it actually enters our world can be both thrilling and useful. It is good to know what's happening, whether it's expected or when you should seek advice. After all, developing within you is a brand new life and your foremost priority at this time is to be alert to all its needs and moods!

Most babies are pretty energetic when in the womb. But each one moves to its own music and choreography. It's very easy to understand the individual pattern of your baby's movements and adapt to them. However, if you feel any change or decrease in the usual pattern of movements, do not wait but consult your doctor immediately.

### What are Fetal movements?

Though the first trimester is a period during which the fetus develops astoundingly fast, it is still very tiny and too far buried in the cushioning comfort of your womb for you to sense any of its movements. Though some women feel the slight twitches and flits during the fourth month, it's usually between 20 to 24 weeks of pregnancy that most moms-to-be recognise tiny sensations in the uterus. Doctors call these **fetal movements**. If you have not started to feel movements by the fifth month, it's advisable to visit your doctor and get an ultrasound.



As your pregnancy advances, these movements become more varied in pattern, but predictable, stronger and noticeable. Apart from the kicks and punches that can be strong enough to jolt you upright, you may also feel a series of fluttering movements. When you do, you know your little one is having a fit of hiccups!

Do not compare your baby's movements with that of your pregnant friend's baby's or even with that of your earlier child's. Babies are individuals just like us and each one has its own activity rhythm. You should become familiar with the unique type and pattern of your baby's fetal movements, and be able to recognise the periods of quiet or movement. As the baby continuously grows, its movements may feel different, but should occur throughout the course of the day.

### **What should you do if you notice reduction in fetal movements**

It is always advisable to immediately contact your doctor if you feel that your baby's movements have decreased. If you are busy at work and have not paid attention to fetal movements, have carbohydrate rich food like chocolates or juices, lie down on your left and keep a watch for at least 2 hours. If you feel 3 or more fetal movements during this time, there is no need to panic. However, continue to monitor the fetal movements for the rest of the day and for the next few days to ensure that your baby has resumed normal movements. You also need to report this to your doctor for any further suggestions.

### **If you are less than 28 weeks pregnant**

If you feel that your fetal movements have decreased considerably, you should immediately inform your Doctor. He / She will test for fetal heart beats using a sonic aid and take appropriate action. If all is well, you will be sent home with advice on how to closely monitor fetal movements.

### **If you are more than 28 weeks pregnant**

If you feel your baby's movements have come down noticeably, you must meet your Doctor immediately. The Doctor will monitor the fetal heart using a machine called Cardiotocograph (CTG).



The CTG monitors your baby's heart rate for a period of 20 minutes. If the CTG is normal and no other risk factor is identified, you will be discharged. If few or no fetal movements are recorded or other risk factors have been identified, then your Doctor will advise you on the options available to you so that you plan the next steps.

In general, 15 movements in 12 hours, 2 to 3 movements in 1 hour after having food are considered normal. If you have high risk factors like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease then you must closely watch for movements of the baby and any decrease should be brought to your doctor's attention soon.

**PLEASE NEVER HESITATE TO CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU ARE UNSURE OF YOUR BABY'S MOVEMENTS.**

### THE TALENT REPOSITORY

Obstetrician | Gynecologists | Laparoscopy Surgeon |  
Neonatologist | Nutritionist | Pediatrician | Cosmetologist |  
Lactation Consultant | Dietitian | Anesthetist



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