

Obstetrics

Movements Matter: Your baby's movements in pregnancy

Fetal Well Being Unit: 02476 967427

Open Monday to Friday

7:30am – 8:30pm

Saturday & Sunday

9am – 5pm

Labour Ward Triage: 02476 967333

Open 24 hours



What are normal movements?

Most women usually begin to feel their baby move between 18 to 20 weeks of pregnancy. Some women will not become aware of movements until after this. Fetal 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 specific number of normal movements. Your baby should develop an individual pattern of movements that you will become aware of. They will have sleep periods during which they will not move, but these rarely last longer than 90 minutes. The number of movements tends to increase until 32 weeks of pregnancy and then stay about the same. It is important to remember that you should continue to feel your baby move right up to the time you go into labour and throughout labour too.

Why are my baby's movements important?

Feeling your baby move provides reassurance that they are well. A reduction in fetal movements or an increased change in the pattern can sometimes be an important warning sign that a baby is unwell. A change in your baby's movements can be associated with stillbirth. This is a risk for any pregnancy, but most women who experience one episode or a change in their baby's movements will have a straight forward pregnancy and go on to deliver a healthy baby. We have produced this leaflet to help you know what to do if you are concerned about your baby's movements.



Patient Information

What should I do if I am worried?

If you are **less than 26 weeks pregnant** you should contact your community midwife at your GP surgery who will arrange to see you as soon as possible. If you have any difficulties with contacting your community midwife please call the community midwives office. Our community offices are open Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm:

Coventry: 02476 967424

Rugby: 01788 663184

Out of hours please call the Labour Ward Triage: 02476 967333.

If you are **more than 26 weeks pregnant** you should contact Fetal Well Being Unit 02476 967427 or Labour Ward Triage 02476 967333 who will arrange to see you as soon as possible.

What will happen when I am seen?

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

If you are **less than 26 weeks pregnant** the midwife will listen to your baby's heartbeat and perform a full antenatal check-up. If there are any additional concerns it may be necessary to refer you to the hospital the same day for further assessment.

If you are **more than 26 weeks pregnant** the Fetal Well Being Unit or Labour Ward Triage will listen to your baby's heartbeat and perform a full antenatal check-up. They will put you on a machine that monitors your baby's heartbeat. This can last up to an hour and provides information about your baby's wellbeing. Many babies will start to move normally after this and you will usually be able to go home. In some cases it may be necessary for you to be seen by a doctor and an ultrasound scan may be arranged.

What if my baby's movements are reduced again?

If after discharge you are still not happy with your baby's movement, you must contact Fetal Well Being Unit or Labour Ward Triage immediately, even if everything was normal when you were initially seen. Never hesitate to contact the Fetal Well Being Unit or Labour Ward Triage for advice; no matter how many times this happens.

You must not wait until the next day to seek help if you are worried about your baby's movements.

One in every 200 births in England ends in stillbirth.

Your baby's movements are an important way of checking they are well.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format please contact and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Document History

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