

My baby's movements in pregnancy



Most women are first aware of their babies' movements by the time they are 18-20 weeks pregnant. If this is your first pregnancy this could be after 20 weeks. If you have been pregnant before, you may feel movements as early as 16 weeks.

What does a baby movement feel like?

Women describe their movements as a flutter, kick, roll or swish.

How often will my baby move?

As the baby develops, both the number and the type of movements will change with your baby's activity pattern. Usually, afternoon and evening periods are times of peak activity for your baby. During both day and night, your baby has sleep periods that mostly last between 20 and 40 minutes but rarely last longer than 90 minutes. Your baby will usually not move during these sleep periods. Your baby will have their own pattern of movements that you should get to know in order to recognise any changes that concern you.

Why is it important to be aware of my baby's movements?

A baby's movements indicate his or her wellbeing - if you notice any change in your baby's movements, please contact the Hospital Maternity triage so they can check you and your baby.

How can I prompt my baby's movements?

Try to lie on your left side and focus on your baby's movements for two hours. Sometimes if you rub your baby bump you may notice a little wiggle. The number of movements tends to increase until 32 weeks of pregnancy and then stay about the same, although the type of movement may change as you get nearer to your due date. If you are busy, you may not notice all movements. Importantly, you should continue to feel your baby move right up to the time you go into labour. Your baby should continue to move during labour.

It is a myth that babies move less or stop moving towards the end of pregnancy.

How do I know when to contact the hospital?

Please call the Maternity triage straight away if there is any change to the regular pattern of your baby's movements. This is especially important if you are experiencing fewer movements.

Please do not use any hand-held monitors, dopplers or phone apps. Even if you detect a heartbeat this does not mean your baby is well. Always seek advice from a midwife

Contact numbers

Royal Sussex County Hospital Maternity triage 01273 664793

Princess Royal Hospital Maternity Triage 01444 448669

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