

Fetal Movement Counts

Your Baby's Movements

During the beginning of your third trimester you may feel like you're carrying an athlete. You feel plenty of kicks, squirms, flips, hiccups and other movements in between the quiet periods.

By the final month, your baby has grown larger and has nearly run out of room to move! You may think your baby is not moving as much.

By keeping track of your baby's movements for each day you will get to know your baby's activity pattern. This can help alert you if your baby is not feeling well.

Fetal Movement Counts

Every baby has normal sleep and awake times, so your baby will have periods of both quiet and active time. A movement may be a kick, stretch, turn or flip.

A total of 10 or more distinct movements in 2 hours suggests your baby is doing well. If your baby is moving less than usual, this may be a sign that he or she is under some stress or that a problem may be developing.

If you have not felt your baby move in a while, eat some food and drink some water. If you do not feel movement after 1 hour of resting, call your health care provider or birth center.

When To Count

Once a day, during the third trimester of your pregnancy, record your baby's activity. Choose a time of day when your baby is active. Try to do this about the same time every day.

If you have not been able to quit smoking, try not to smoke for at least 1 hour before you start counting. Smoking cigarettes decreases the amount of oxygen your baby gets. This can make your baby less active.

How To Count

- Choose a quiet place where you can focus on your baby's movements.
- Lie down on your side or sit in a comfortable chair.
- Write down the time you start counting your baby's movements. (Use the chart on the back.) Put a check for each time your baby kicks, twists or turns. Do not count hiccups. Keep track until you have felt 10 movements. Do not count longer than 2 hours.
- When your baby has moved 10 times, write down that time. Write down the total time it took to count 10 movements. (Often, the 10 movements occur in fewer than 30 minutes.)

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if:

- your baby has not moved 10 times in 2 hours
- you notice a major change in your baby's activity
- you are worried about your baby's activity level
- you have questions or concerns.

(over)

