

What to Know: Fetal Kick Counts



Some mothers-to-be may feel their baby move as early as 18 weeks. At first, it may just feel like a flutter, but as you continue in your pregnancy, you will soon get to know your baby's movements.

Your doctor may have you start monitoring your baby's movements at around 24-28 weeks. This is an easy way to check your baby's health and well-being every day. It is something you can do at home to help calm some of your fears.

Why Fetal Kick Counts Are Important

Counting fetal kicks is very important for women who have high blood pressure and/or are pregnant with twins. Even if you do not have one of these conditions, it is still important to count them during any pregnancy.

All babies move in different amounts at different times of the day. Keep in mind that babies have sleep cycles. By monitoring your fetal kick counts, you will start to understand your baby's patterns. You can use this time to start to bond with your baby. You can talk to your baby, sing, or read a book.

How to monitor fetal kick counts:

- **Do them at the same time each day.** Babies are usually most active in the evening and/or after meals.
- **Sit quietly or lay on your side.** Try not to be distracted by other things, like TV or your phone. You can place your hands/arms around your belly. Lying on your side is best while pregnant because it allows for the most blood flow to your baby.
- **Your goal is to see how long it takes your baby to move (not just kick) 10 times within a given hour.** Use the examples on the next page to note the length of time it takes to feel 10 movements in a notebook.

We Offer Maternity Care Right in Your Neighborhood!

High-Risk Case Management

If you are having problems with your pregnancy, our case managers can help and answer any questions you may have.

Questions?

Call our Patient Assistance
Line at **(888) 787-1712**

TDD/TTY users can dial 711.
Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Continued on back →

What to Count

Count the baby's stretches, rolls, jabs, and kicks.
Do not count hiccups.

Here are two examples to get you started.

The first one shows how to track the start and stop time, then tally your findings. The second shows how to track the time it takes to feel 70 fetal movements.

Example #1

In this example, there are only eight movements on Friday during the hour.

Day	Start time	Tally 10 movements, then note time	Total minutes
Monday	7:00 p.m.	xxxxxxxxx 7:32 p.m.	Total time: 32 min
Tuesday	7:15 p.m.	xxxxxxxxx 7:33 p.m.	Total time: 18 min
Wednesday	7:00 p.m.	xxxxxxxxx 7:21 p.m.	Total time: 21 min
Thursday	7:00 p.m.	xxxxxxxxx 7:27 p.m.	Total time: 27 min
Friday	7:10 p.m.	xxxxxxx 8:10 p.m.	

Example #2

Day	Date	Start time	Stop time	# of minutes to feel 10 movements
Sunday	2/22	7:05 p.m.	7:28 p.m.	28
Monday	2/23	7:00 p.m.	7:32 p.m.	32
Tuesday	2/24	7:15 p.m.	7:33 p.m.	18
Wednesday	2/25	7:05 p.m.	7:21 p.m.	21
Thursday	2/26	7:05 p.m.	7:27 p.m.	27
Friday	2/27	7:00 p.m.		*
Saturday	2/28	7:10 p.m.		

What to Do: Decreased Fetal Movement

If you feel decreased movement, do not panic!

- **Keep in mind that babies do not move as much when they are sleeping.** If you do not count 70 movements in one hour, repeat the steps after having a glass of juice or a snack. If you have gestational diabetes, try drinking a glass of ice water instead.
- **After the second hour of repeating the test, if you still do not have 10 movements, call your doctor.** If it is after hours, go to the Labor and Delivery department of your hospital. Let them know that your baby is having decreased fetal movements. This can be your baby's signal to you that there may be a problem.
- **For some mothers, especially first-time moms, it can be hard to notice fetal movements before 24 weeks.** A good time to start is around 28 weeks. Also, remember that every baby is different. Some babies may average 5-70 minutes to get to 10 movements, while others may range from 40-50 minutes. So, it is important for you to get to know your baby's patterns. Your baby's active time may be first thing in the morning or right after lunch. If this is the case, simply monitor your fetal kick counts at this time of the day.

If you have questions at any time, call your OB nurse case manager or your doctor's office.

Knowledge Is Power

If you have questions about your pregnancy, ask your doctor. You can also visit the following websites:

March of Dimes: www.marchofdimes.org

First 5 California: www.first5california.com

Remember: If you have any questions or concerns at any time, make sure you contact your doctor right away.