

## Baby's movements: What is normal?

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Movements are a reassuring sign because they are related to your baby's muscle and nervous system development. Like adults, each baby has its own individual pattern of movement and it is important for you to become familiar with what is normal for your baby rather than comparing with someone else or another pregnancy.

### *When should I start to feel my baby move?*

- Before 20 weeks movements can be mistaken for wind or feel like gentle flutters. As the baby grows the feeling of movement becomes clearer.
- Most women will be aware of movements at around 20 weeks, sometimes earlier if this is not your first pregnancy, and sometimes a bit later too.
- Before 24 weeks of pregnancy you may not feel regular daily movements.
- After 24 weeks movements should occur daily and can feel like flutters, kicks, stretches, pushes or sometimes even hiccups.
- During the last few weeks of the pregnancy the movements may feel different—probably due to less space in your uterus, but the pattern of movements should still be similar.
- It's not true that babies move less towards the end of pregnancy.
- When you are in early labour the baby should still continue to move, although you may be distracted by the labour and less aware of the movements.

Your midwife or doctor will be interested in your baby's pattern of movements, asking you at every visit. They will ask you to contact the hospital if you have any concerns about a change in patterns or frequency.

### *What counts as movement?*

- Movements can be described as anything from a kick or a flutter, to a swish or roll.
- There is no set number of normal movements. It is about you getting to know your baby's unique pattern.
- Most babies settle into a pattern around 24 weeks.

### *What should you do if you think your baby hasn't moved like they usually do?*

- Once you become aware that the pattern has changed, or you have not noticed your baby moving during the day you should sit or lie down in a quiet place, try to relax and focus on feeling your baby's movements.

Some things can affect how you sense your baby's movements, but how your baby moves should be reassuring to you.

### *When should you call a midwife?*

- If your baby moves less than what you think is normal, or the type or pattern of movements is very different (has changed)
- If you have not felt your baby move during the course of a day
- Anytime you are concerned about your baby's movements
- **Do not wait until the next day to call – even if you have an appointment the next day - you are not wasting the midwives time**

### *What will happen after you call a midwife with your concerns?*

- The midwife will ask you a few questions and if you have already spent some time focusing on your baby's movements they will get you to come to the hospital so that we can assess your situation, listen to your baby's heartbeat, perform a cardiotocograph 'CTG' and review the whole picture.
- A CTG is a tracing of your baby's heart rate on a monitor and gives us a snap shot of that point in time of how your baby is going, in most situations will provide the reassurance that all is well. The CTG takes about 30-45 minutes to perform.
- Sometimes we will arrange an ultrasound scan to check that the fluid levels are normal and the baby and placenta appear healthy.
- If you have an ultrasound we will also get a doctor to review you and discuss the results with you.
- In most situations you will be able to go home within 2-3 hours (occasionally longer).

### *What do I do if I came in for assessment one day and have the same concerns a day or two later?*

Exactly the same - we always ask that you call us to discuss your concerns and if necessary come in for a check. Please do not sit at home and worry.

### **Contact numbers 24 hours a day**

Birth Unit 0439 869 035

Midwifery Group Practice: call your designated midwife