



HUTT maternity

Hutt Valley Maternity Care

Baby's movements

What to expect throughout your pregnancy
Information for women

Baby's First Movements

Feeling your baby move for the first time, is an exciting occasion in your pregnancy and is a reassuring sign that your baby is healthy. The first movements in pregnancy are usually felt around **16 to 22 weeks** (more likely to be 22 weeks if it is your first baby). These first movements often feel more like flutters or like popcorn popping rather than big movements.

How often does your baby move?

Babies move frequently, many of these movements (thumb sucking or wiggling fingers or toes) the mother cannot feel. However, bigger movements such as kicking, stretching and rolling are easier to feel. As your baby grows the movements will be more noticeable to you. In the last several months of pregnancy you should be feeling regular obvious movements every day.

Some women don't feel as many movements, even when their babies are healthy. This can be due to the position of the placenta or if the woman is overweight.

Babies also sleep sometimes! These sleep cycles usually last 20 to 40 minutes, and never longer than 90 minutes.

Knowing your baby

It is good to "check in" with your baby especially if you have had a busy time. From 28 weeks of pregnancy you may notice that your baby has its own pattern of movement. It is not necessary to keep a written record of these, although some

women choose too. Babies often move more in the early morning or evening and you will feel them best if you are lying or sitting down.

By getting to know your own baby's movements you will take notice of their sleep and wake cycles. You will also be able to detect when the pattern of movements have changed.

As a general guide most healthy babies move more than 10 times over 2 hours.

End of pregnancy movements

A baby who is healthy will continue to have regular, strong pattern of movements in the last few weeks of pregnancy. Women report that the movements may change, as the space reduces, however they should still be as frequent and the same pattern.

What if you are concerned about your baby's movements?

If you are concerned about the frequency and strength of your baby's movements contact your midwife or doctor immediately. Your lead maternity carer will want to assess you. This involves an ante natal check, monitoring of your baby's heart rate in hospital using a CTG (cardiotocograph) machine and ensuring you are marking the baby's movements that you are feeling. Depending on the results of the CTG, an ultrasound may also be ordered. If there are concerns with any of the results your midwife may consult with a specialist obstetrician.

If you have had a check up and everything with baby was fine but decreased movements persist, contact your midwife or doctor on the same day for further monitoring that day.

References:

Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand (PSANZ). (2016). Getting to know My Baby's Movements. Author

If You Have Concerns about Your Baby's Movements at any time (during the day, night or over weekends) contact your midwife or doctor to make a plan for review. Don't delay until your next antenatal visit or daylight hours.

If you are unable to contact your LMC, phone Delivery Suite on 04 5697535.

Complied with grateful thanks to Midwife Abby Hewitt 2012

Further Reading:

Ask your midwife or doctor if you require more information. Remember Google has never had a baby!