

Dr. Rebecca L. Simon

Obstetric Services

WEEKS 4 TO 10 First Trimester

BABY DEVELOPMENT

The cells that are developing in your uterus are called an embryo. The heart, no bigger than a poppy seed, will begin to beat in this period. The early placenta and umbilical cord will start to function. Major organs have begun to develop. The bones appear. The head, face, eyes, ears, arms, fingers, legs and toes form. At 4 weeks, the baby is half the size of a pea. At 8 weeks, it resembles a human being. By 10 weeks, the baby weighs half an ounce and is two inches long.

MOM'S CHANGES

When you become pregnant every body system undergoes changes. One of the first changes may be breast tenderness. Some, not all, women will develop pregnancy symptoms of nausea, fatigue, and frequent urination, as early as five weeks. These all are normal. Mild cramping and twinges without spotting or bleeding can also be normal in the first weeks of pregnancy due to stretching of the uterine round ligaments as your uterus changes from fist size to grapefruit size. It can be normal to have some spotting after intercourse for up to 48 hours.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/CONSIDERATIONS

If you have not already started taking a prenatal vitamin, now is the time to start an either over-the-counter or prescription one. At this period, no medications are best due to the rapidly forming cells of the embryo. Tylenol and Benadryl are okay. Please call or discuss any other medications with your doctor before taking. Avoid ibuprofen and aspirin.

NEXT VISIT

Your next visit will be between 8 and 12 weeks. We will discuss your medical history, as well as family medical history and first trimester pregnancy information. You will have a pap and lab work done. This is also a great time to ask any questions you may have. If the exam is not done at an earlier visit, then it will be done at 14 weeks. You will then have an appointment with your provider at 12 to 16 weeks.

SPECIAL TIPS

Write down any questions you have as you think of them and bring them with you to your appointments. This way when you come in you won't forget and all your questions will be answered.

For nausea, cucumbers soaked in water, lemons and ginger can help decrease your nausea. Eating small, frequent meals may also be helpful. Take Vitamin B6 daily.

Get as much sleep as possible at this time. Sleep should be at the top of your list.

DAD'S CORNER

Encourage mom to rest as much as possible. Remember, lots of changes are going on, both physically and emotionally. Be loving and supportive to help her through these changes.

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10 – 14 WEEKS

BABY DEVELOPMENT

The baby weighs between .5 oz. and 1.5 oz. and can be 2 to 3 inches in length. The baby is continuing to form during the end of the first trimester. Now the baby enters the fetal stage and the swallowing reflex is present and the palate fuses. The kidneys start to function and make urine. The lungs take shape. The external genitalia are formed at 12 weeks.

MOM' CHANGES

The uterus is continuing to grow at this point from the size of your fist to the size of a grapefruit. You may still be experiencing some nausea, fatigue and frequent urination. You may also start to notice constipation, headaches and heartburn. The mother's blood volume increases by 40-50% during pregnancy.

NEXT VISIT

Your next visit will be at 14 weeks and if you didn't have your full exam and Pap smear at 10 weeks you will then.

SPECIAL TIPS

- Headaches are common and Tylenol is OKAY to use. Let us know if this does not help.
- Constipation is common and you can alleviate this from happening by maintaining good hydration (62 oz. daily), increasing fiber intake in your diet, exercising and avoiding caffeine.
- Heartburn is common and you can use Tums anytime. We also recommend taking Zantac, avoiding large amounts of fluids at once, staying upright for at least 30 minutes after drinking and eating, and monitoring your diet to find what causes upset.

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14 – 18 WEEKS

BABY DEVELOPMENT

Baby is 3 – 6- inches long and weighs about 3 – 8 oz. A heartbeat can be heard with Doppler. Baby is now nourished by the placenta. Hair is becoming obvious, and baby can start frowning, grimacing and sucking its thumb. In the 16th week, nails develop and the body is covered by a fine hair known as lanugo (this protects the skin while in water). At 17 weeks, baby is the size of a pear and the head is still larger than the body. The heart and kidneys are starting to work. In the 18th week, baby's eyes look straight ahead and ears are prominent. Bone development begins and baby is the size of a small banana.

MOM'S CHANGES

With beginning the 2nd trimester, you should be feeling better, less nausea, less breast tenderness and more energy due to the hormone changes. You may, though, start noticing you are having heartburn. You may use Tums and Zantac for this discomfort. The uterus is starting to grow out of the pelvic region into the abdomen. There may be low abdominal or back discomfort due to the stretching of the uterine muscles and ligaments during the next month. You may also notice leg cramps. Your or your partner may notice that you are more forgetful. This is due to hormonal changes. Breasts may also start to feel heavier. A good supportive bra is important.

SPECIAL TESTING/CONSIDERATIONS

Between 15 – 20 weeks, you have the option of doing a maternal quad screen. This is a special screening test that looks at your risk of having a baby with Down's syndrome, spinal bifida, or trisomy 18. It is a blood test that looks at different markers in the mother's blood stream that the baby is excreting. For mothers who are over the age of 35 or have a higher risk for having a baby with a chromosomal abnormality, an amniocentesis may be an option. This is a procedure done under ultrasound by a physician. It involves inserting a needle through the mother's abdomen into the amniotic fluid, which is then sent to a special lab for testing and chromosome analysis. This is often the calmest, most relaxing time of your pregnancy. This is time to start making decisions about childcare, pediatricians, the "baby living quarters" and career choices after you deliver.

NEXT VISIT

Your next visit will be at 18 weeks. As always, we will obtain your weight, blood pressure, and urine sample that checks for protein and glucose. We will always listen for fetal heart rate and measure your uterus. The measurement should equal the weeks pregnant you are, plus or minus 2 cm.

SPECIAL TIPS

- Papaya or fresh pineapple may help heartburn.
- If you go for clothes that stretch, you will not need as many maternity clothes.

DAD'S CORNER

Discuss family finances with your partner. Plan a "holiday" together before the baby is born to enjoy meals or trips that you may not have time for later. Intercourse is acceptable unless otherwise instructed.

DR. REBECCA L. SIMON

OBSTETRIC SERVICES

18-24 WEEKS

BABY DEVELOPMENT

Baby is around 8 – 12 inches long and weighs almost a pound. Vernix, the slippery white protective covering, is starting to form on the baby and it can suck its thumb. Baby's eyes have developed and the first signs of teeth are showing beneath the gum line. Lanugo covers the baby now. It sucks and swallows amniotic fluid and is able to grasp with its hands.

MOM'S CHANGES

At this point, the uterus is at the naval and will grow a centimeter per week. Baby is very well protected by the amniotic fluid. The body is like the concrete of a swimming pool and the amniotic fluid is the water and the baby is on the life raft. Be reassured that in most situations, it takes a tremendous force to harm the baby. Most first time mothers will feel movement between 20 – 22 weeks. Mothers who have had other children may notice movements between 18 – 20 weeks. You may feel these first flutters as a rumbling in your stomach. Weight gain at this point may be between 10 – 15 pounds and you may have a steady gain of half a pound per week. With the expanding uterus pushing against the lungs, many moms will notice an increase in breathlessness.

NEXT VISIT

Your next visit will be a routing visit at 24 - 26 weeks. At this week's visit, we will give you information on gestational diabetes screening. When we check for Diabetes we also be checking your hemoglobin, which is the iron part of your blood to make sure you are not anemic. The gestational diabetes and anemia test will be done by drawing your blood. The provider will discuss preterm labor signs and symptoms, hospital registration and classes.

SPECIAL TIPS

- Reading and singing to your baby during this stage may aid in bonding after delivery.
- If you have not yet, start thinking about childcare for after the baby is born.
- Since baby's teeth are already forming, it is important that you get enough fluoride, through supplements or your water.

DAD'S CORNER

Don't be discouraged if in this period, you cannot feel the baby kicking. This will come in the next month. Read and sing to your baby as it can hear you and this is a great way to start bonding with your baby. Dads can help with responsibilities of looking for baby equipment.

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OBSTETRIC SERVICES

24 – 28 WEEKS

BABY DEVELOPMENT

At the beginning of this period, baby weighs a little over one pound and will gain around 4 ounces a day. Baby is up to 11 inches long. Blood vessels in the lungs are developing to prepare for breathing. Baby is swallowing regularly. Baby's body is filling out and taking up more room in your uterus. Baby's senses are developing fast at the end of this period and baby will respond to sound more consistently. Baby may also begin to develop a consistent sleep-wake pattern. Eyes are formed and eyelashes and eyebrows appear.

MOM'S CHANGES

You may notice your gums bleeding when brushing your teeth. Stretch marks may now start to appear on your breast, hips and abdomen. Unfortunately, stretch marks are caused by hormones and will not go away with cream, though they may be lightened.

SPECIAL TESTING/CONSIDERATIONS

If your blood type is RH negative (i.e. A-, B-, O-, AB-), you will need to have an antibody screen blood draw at 28 weeks and may receive a RhoGam injection at 29 weeks.

The reason that Rh negative mothers must undergo this special testing is because if the blood of the fetus is Rh positive, the mother's Rh negative blood may form antibodies that will fight the Rh positive blood of the fetus. This is called Rh disease and can cause the fetus to have health problems. By doing an antibody screen on the mother and giving her RhoGam, this prevents the mother from forming Rh antibodies, thus preventing Rh disease.

NEXT VISIT

Your next visit will be at 28 weeks and is routine, blood pressure, weight, urine testing, and listening to and measuring the baby. If you are Rh negative, you will obtain a blood draw called an antibody screen. You will then receive RhoGram. Also, if your Glucose tolerance test has not been done, this will take place. Allow at least one hour for this to be done.

SPECIAL TIPS

- Have a beauty treatment for mid-pregnancy pampering – YOU DESERVE IT!
- Exercise may help you sleep. Even a half an hour walk in the day can help you sleep better at night.
- Now is a good time to start working on the nursery.
- Start choosing who your baby's health provider is going to be.

DAD'S CORNER

You may want to check with your employer about paternity leave and get any necessary forms.

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28 – 31 WEEKS

BABY DEVELOPMENT

Baby can weigh up to 2 to 3 pounds and be up to 14 inches long. Baby is now opening its' eyes and will turn its' head toward any continuous light source. Fat layers are forming under the skin to prepare for life outside the womb. Baby's brain is growing rapidly and baby is gaining weight fast. Lanugo begins to disappear. The nails appear. Testes begin to descend in males.

MOM'S CHANGES

Most women will gain a half pound to one pound per week. You may feel breathless as baby is pushing up under the diaphragm. You may be having some tightening in your uterus that is normal, but remember if it is more than four an hour, empty your bladder, hydrate and lay down on your left side and rest. Monitor for 2 hours and if you continue to have 4 an hour, call our office. A contraction is a contraction, is a contraction!! You should feel at least six baby movements in a one hour period of time, two times per day. If less than six movements twice a day, drink a can of Coke, Mt. Dew, or eat a candy bar and then sit down and monitor for one hour. If still less than six movements, contact the office if it's during office hours, page the on-call physician or go to the hospital where you are planning on delivering.

SPECIAL TESTING/CONSIDERATIONS

If you are Rh negative, you will have an ABS drawn and will be given RhoGam in this period. You may also want to consider cord blood preservation. This is a process that when the baby is born, cells are collected from the umbilical cord and then sent off to a facility to be tested, processed, and preserved. If ever needed at a future time, the cells are available to potentially treat a number of life threatening diseases.

NEXT VISIT

This visit will be a routine visit. Your visits will now be every two weeks.

SPECIAL TIPS

- Start thinking of baby names.
- Make sure you have pre-registered at your hospital.
- Sleeping with a pillow tucked between your legs may aid with sleep.
- If getting a backache, you may want to switch to low heeled shoes, you can also see about a maternity belt which can be helpful.
- Think about a car seat. You will need one before you come home from the hospital.

DAD'S CORNER

Treat mom to a special event (a movie, romantic dinner, etc.) which you may not have time for when your baby comes.

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31 – 34 WEEKS

BABY DEVELOPMENT

Baby can weigh 3 to 4 pounds and measure 15 to 16 inches. Baby will gain one third to one half of her birth weight from 33 weeks to birth. Baby may be head down in the uterus, but don't worry if it's not, babies can change position. More reflexes are present now. The central nervous system directs rhythmic breathing movements and controls body temperature.

MOM'S CHANGES

Roughly half of the weight gain you have is going to the baby. You may be noticing swelling. Swelling is normal as soon as you get out of bed, due to the weight of the baby on the blood vessels and will go down overnight. If legs are still swollen in the morning or you have a headache, blurred vision or your calf is tight, you need to call and report this. Swelling is often worse in the warmer weather and late in the day. You may notice a tingling sensation or pain in your pelvis or down your buttocks into your legs, which may be due also to the pressure of the baby on the nerves.

NEXT VISIT

This visit will be a routine visit at 34 weeks.

REMINDER

Fetal movements – baby should still be moving six times in an hour twice a day. The movement may not be strong, but a more put up, roll or flutter. Remember, if less than six times an hour, drink a coke or eat a candy bar. Then lie down and put your hands on your abdomen to feel movements. If still less than six an hour, call our office or go to the hospital if after business hours.

SPECIAL TIPS

- Sex during pregnancy is fine unless told otherwise by your physician.
- Drinking more water can actually decrease swelling.
- Watermelon is also a natural diuretic to decrease swelling.
- Start thinking about packing your bag for the hospital.
- If you have not taken classes and want a tour of the hospital, you will need to call the hospital and arrange a time for a tour.

DAD'S CORNER

You want to make sure you have a pager, cell phone or some other reliable means of communication in case mom needs you.

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33-37 weeks

BABY DEVELOPMENT

In this period, baby can weigh 5 pounds and measure 18 inches. Baby will gain one third to one half of her birth weight from 33 weeks to delivery. Baby may be head down in the uterus, but don't worry if it's not, babies can still change positions. By 35 weeks, your baby's lungs are almost fully developed. You may also notice a protrusion of baby's elbow, foot or head when baby stretches and squirms.

MOM'S CHANGES

Roughly half of the weight gain you have is going to the baby. You may be noticing swelling. Swelling is normal as soon as you get out of bed, due to the weight of the baby on blood vessels, and will go down overnight. If legs are still swollen in the morning or you have a headache, blurred vision or your calf is tight, you need to call and report this. Swelling is often worse in the warmer weather and late in the day. You may notice a tingling sensation or pain in your pelvis or down your buttocks into your legs, which may be due also to the pressure of the baby on the nerves. From 36 weeks until delivery, you may notice more contractions. If it is less than six an hour, it is okay. After 37 weeks, it does not matter how many contractions you are having because you have reached term.

SPECIAL TESTING/CONSIDERATIONS

At 35 weeks you will have a beta strep done.

NEXT VISIT

Will be at 35-36 weeks and will begin to be weekly thereafter.

REMINDER

Fetal Movement: Baby should still be moving six times in an hour twice a day. The movements may not be as strong, but a more put up, roll or flutter. Remember, if less than six an hour drink a coke or eat a candy bar. Then lie down and put hands on your abdomen to feel for movements. If still less than six movements an hour, call our office or to the hospital if after business hours.

SPECIAL TIPS

Sex during pregnancy is fine as long as you have not been told otherwise by your doctor

Drinking more water can actually decrease swelling.

Watermelon is also a natural diuretic to decrease swelling.

I strongly encourage you to pre-register at the hospital any time after 30 weeks. No appointment is necessary.

DAD'S CORNER

You want to make sure you have a pager, cell phone, or some other reliable means of communication in case mom needs you.