



TAKING CARE OF YOU AND YOUR BABY – THE PREGNANCY TIMELINE

Pregnancy spans 40 weeks, divided into 3 trimesters, lets delve deeper into the changes you can expect each week.

Week 1:

Technically speaking, your Ob-gyn will not count the first week of your pregnancy to be pregnancy at all. Because it is very difficult to pin-point ovulation & conception, doctors will date pregnancy starting from the first day of your last period. Thus, you would eventually conceive your baby in a week or so, depending on the length of your cycle. Symptoms of the first week include – vaginal bleeding, cramps & pain in the lower back, bloated belly and mood swings.

Week 2:

At two weeks pregnancy, the symptoms are still a little difficult to tell. The hormones in your blood still difficult to trace by a blood test but high enough for some symptoms to give you an indication. Frequent urination, sore breasts, spotting, excessive fatigue and bloated belly are some of the early signs that you could pick up. Some women also have an early onset of morning sickness to further evidence that you have successfully conceived.

Week 3

Into the third week of pregnancy, conception is definitely accomplished, and you will begin to see the traces of HCG in your body. Nausea sets in and you will notice perceptible changes in your breasts. Spotting is normal and if your cycle is typically less than 28 days, then you may have missed it. A pregnancy test at home could give you a positive result and you should definitely see your Ob-gyn with a blood test to be done for certainty & safety.

Week 4

By the fourth week of pregnancy, your pregnancy is detected and established while the baby has already grown but still in the microscopic scale. The baby is just about settling into the new home that is your uterus and all set to undertake the next phase of development that will happen over the next few weeks and months. It is vital to identify an Ob-gyn by this stage and schedule appointment to understand the changes expected to happen next.

Week 5

The little one growing within is now the size of an apple seed. This is also your first complete month of pregnancy with morning sickness, fatigue and sore breasts being very common. Your belly is still normal and weight-gain almost negligible. The embryo, small in size, is however developing major organs such as the heart, lungs, liver etc., at this stage. This is a good time to discuss a personalized diet plan and begin eating healthy.

Week 6

At six weeks, pregnancy might still be very new and with the mood swings, quite possible to feel emotional. The embryo at this stage is about quarter of an inch but growing rapidly to double its size over the course of the week. A sick stomach is possible at this stage and you are advised to take up fibre-rich food and drink lots of water to overcome it. Your pre-natal appointment and scan is just around the corner and yes, we know you're excited.

Week 7

Week seven of pregnancy and the news of conception has definitely set in. The symptoms are definitely making their presence felt and you will begin to have both cravings & aversions with your food. Cramps, fatigue and morning sickness continue, and you see that mood swings are common. The belly is still as normal as it would be. The embryo inside is growing at a rapid pace and you have just a week before your first prenatal scan.

Week 8

Phew, already coming up on two months of pregnancy you're likely to have your first prenatal scan in this week. And quite possibly also get to hear your child's first heartbeat. Your Ob-gyn will know for sure how far along are you in your pregnancy. Your uterus will begin to expand, and some weight-gain is quite normal. Some blood tests are in order along with urine and pap smears to check for any abnormalities and infections that may set in.

Week 9

Your little foetus is now as big as a cherry – measuring about an inch and weighing 20 grams. The baby is now no longer an embryo, it's now a foetus. The HCG hormone in your body is at its peak and the other hormones continue to work overtime. This results in mood swings and continued morning sickness with some headache, nasal congestion as well. The expanding uterus is going to give you the first signs of the bump.

Week 10

Tenth week of pregnancy and the foetus inside is growing at a breakneck speed. This means that you will see your muscles & ligaments stretching out. Round ligament pain is quite normal with breasts also growing in size. The morning sickness continues, but not for too long and there will be an increased vaginal discharge. Veins will become thicker and more visible and the first signs of the baby bump are definitely in order by this stage.

Week 11

An inch and half long, the growing foetus is now moving inside your belly. Your mind and of course the body is still getting to grips with the whole pregnancy situation while being gassy is perfectly normal. Avoid food that can cause flatulence. The good news in this week is that morning sickness

will begin to ease-off while fatigue will be on the rise due to the growing placenta and increased hormonal activity in the body.

Week 12

Morning sickness is definitely on the wane and the hormonal rush is easing up too. You are a little more used to being pregnant so not as fatigued as earlier. During this week you may see an increased discharge and your bump is now firmly in place. At 12 weeks, the foetus has formed major organs and organ systems – and is now beginning to develop reflexes. From hereon the baby will begin to grow in size and so will the bump.

Week 13

You are now officially out of the first trimester and into the second. It's been a remarkable progress you've made so far and foetus is almost 3-inches in length. With the morning sickness and fatigue behind you, you are far more comfortable with your pregnancy at this stage. Increased libido is common as well as being slightly more energetic. You will also begin gaining more weight as the foetus inside continues to increase in size and the uterus expands.

Week 14

The baby is now the size of a peach and weighs almost an ounce and half. While most of the symptoms of the first trimester should have subsided by now, it is common for some of them to retreat a little slowly. You are likely to experience increased appetite while your expanding belly might give you some aches & pains. This is a good time now to start a gentle walk or even a yoga regime to ensure you have a healthy & normal term.

Week 15

By the 15th week of pregnancy the foetus is beginning to look more and more normal. With all the limbs in place and moving, you will begin to see your baby even show signs of hiccup inside. You will experience increased libido while the troubles of your tummy will continue. Swollen gums, nosebleeds, shortness of breath are also common. The growing belly continues to expand. However, a sudden spurt in weight must be addressed.

Week 16

Week 16 of pregnancy and another ultrasound is on the cards for you. You may experience the baby kick. At this stage the baby can listen to voices from the outside and will recognize yours at birth. Increased size of the breasts and belly is beginning to lay extra pressure on the back but on the positive side you will begin to see the pregnancy glow. Miscarriages from this stage are relatively low, so that's a bigger plus as well.

Week 17

The baby is now the size of your palm and beginning to develop some body fat of its own. The heartbeat is at 140-150 beats per minute and is beginning to learn to swallow and suckle. You become increasingly sensitive to allergens but have an increased appetite too. Weight gain continues and does so at a rapid pace. You might see some stretch marks as well. Increased water intake helps you stay hydrated.

Week 18

Into your fifth month of pregnancy, you will begin to see swollen feet, backache and cramps. Your appetite is on the increase given the increased nutritional needs of the baby inside. Varicose veins and insomnia are also common during this time of your pregnancy term. The growth of the baby continues and it is now able to move all his muscles. You can have a more perceptible feeling of its kicking, moving and rolling inside you.

Week 19

The baby weighs now about a half pound and covered in a substance called vernix caseosa, a greasy white layer that protects it from the surrounding amniotic fluid. Excessive cramps of the limbs are common during this phase and tend to occur at night. You might also experience tingling and numbness in your fingers and toes, probably a result of your body's swelling tissues pressing on the nerves.

Week 20

This is the half-way point in your pregnancy and the little bundle of joy just about coming home. Your baby is getting bigger, there's still plenty of growing room in there, which allows it to twist and turn. Your nails would become stronger (plus a little dry and brittle) and your body hair and mane is thicker and fuller than usual. The nutritional needs of you and the baby are on the rise and you need to keep your appetite in sync.

Week 21

About the size of a large banana, if you eat one this week, there's a good chance your baby will get a taste of it too as it swallows a bit of amniotic fluid each day (for nutrition, hydration, and to practice digesting). Your body: You may notice some stretch marks as your body expands and your belly & breasts keep growing. These pink, red, or purple streaks appear when the supporting tissue under your skin gets torn as skin stretches.

Week 22

Your baby now weighs a full pound, measures nearly eight inches, has grown eyebrows, eyelashes, and maybe even some hair on the head. It can perceive light and dark, and hear clearly. With the development of the brain and nerve endings, it has a newfound sense of touch and is reaching out to its face! Your ever-expanding belly has the company of growing and swelling feet. That's because the pregnancy hormone relaxin, loosens your ligaments. In turn, the bones beneath those ligaments in the feet spread slightly.

Week 23

The saggy skin of your baby has started to fit the frame as fat deposits fill things out. Beginning this week, the pounds will be packing on and by month end, you can expect a doubling in weight. Organs and bones are visible through the skin, which has a red hue due to developing veins and arteries beneath. But once the fat deposits settle, it'll become less transparent. Your skin changes may include red palms and soles, bluish blotchy legs, heat rash, and skin tags. Not to forget that itchy belly.

Week 24

Your baby is eight and a half inches long and weighs one and a half pounds. Much of the weight is from accumulating baby fat, and growing organs, bones, and muscle. Your belly button could pop

at some point but don't worry, things will return to normal after delivery. Probably your wrists and fingers will still feel numb, thanks to Carpal tunnel syndrome. Blame your hormones but avoid anything that makes your palms red.

Week 25

About nine inches in length and passing the pound and a half mark, is another milestone for your baby. Under its skin, capillaries are forming and filling with blood and by week's end air sacs will develop in the lungs, getting them ready for that first breath. Your baby's tiny nostrils, which have been plugged up until now, are starting to open and the vocal cords are getting ready to roar. Haemorrhoids are common during this phase and from here on a good dental hygiene for you will be helpful for your baby.

Week 26

The baby's eyes begin to open-up and the brain is more developed. For you, insomnia is now a common feature with heartburn & leg cramps, bathroom runs & the big tummy, your body has trouble calming down and drifting off. The baby inside is practicing movements and as its nervous system develops, the movements will become more coordinated. And as it gets bigger, the movements will become more powerful and occasionally, even painful.

Week 27

The baby is now almost four times its weight at 12 weeks and beginning to move about in your belly. About 75% of soon-to-be moms experience edema (mild swelling of the hands, feet, and ankles) around this time. That's because fluids build up in your body tissues thanks to increased blood flow and uterine pressure on the vena cava (the large vein that cycles blood from your lower limbs to your heart).

Week 28

Your baby is setting into the roper position for birth, with the head facing downward toward your body's nearest exit! About 2.5 pounds and almost 16 inches long, its busy learning to blink apart from coughing, sucking, hiccupping, and taking practice breaths. Its sleep now includes the REM (rapid eye movement) phase and that means your baby could be dreaming. This could be the perfect time for you to sign-up and slip into some childbirth classes.

Week 29

The baby is now just about attaining its birth stats and over next 11 weeks will double its weight. As it fills up your womb, you are less likely to feel those kicks and more likely to feel the elbow pokes and knee jabs. You may have minor achiness and swelling or you may be unlucky enough to experience real pain and bulging blue veins, usually from the ankle to the upper thigh. Once you've passed week 28, you can start counting your baby movements.

Week 30

Into the home stretch now, your baby will be packing on weight at the rate of half pound per week for the next seven weeks. Also growing daily is the brain, which is developing grooves and wrinkles. The expanding uterus, now exerting pressure on the stomach, increases heartburn – caused by the pregnancy hormones that cause the pelvic muscles to relax, resulting in food and digestive juices from the tummy enter the chest and throat.

Week 31

The baby's brain connections are now developing at an impressive clip with information being processed, tracking light, and perceiving signals from all five senses. The baby is putting in longer stretches of sleep. Your diaphragm may be feeling very cramped these days as your uterus is pushing up against it. Crowding your lungs and making it difficult for them to expand fully. The result is your body feels light on air and will be so, until your baby drops near the end of pregnancy in preparation for birth.

Week 32

For the baby the moment to pop out is anytime now, and it has spent the past few weeks honing the skills needed to thrive outside – swallowing and breathing to kicking and sucking. With more and more fat accumulating under the skin, your baby is becoming less transparent and more opaque. This week, your body may start prepping for delivery day with practice contractions. How do you know these contractions aren't the real thing? They'll stop if you change position.

Week 33

The amniotic-fluid level in your tummy has now maxed out, which is why some of the pokes and kicks feel sharp now. Antibodies are being passed from you to your little one even as the fetal immune system continues to develop. Midnight bathroom runs, leg cramps, heartburn, and a basketball-sized belly, all make sleep elusive. Third trimester insomnia strikes most Mother. Since your body needs rest, do your best to get comfy.

Week 34

Hitting the 5-pound mark with the vernix (the white coating protecting the skin) now getting thicker – the baby is just about ready. A boy's testicles start making their way down from the abdomen to the scrotum, while the fingernails have probably reached the tips of the fingers by now. Not only can your vision seem less sharp these days, but also a decrease in tear production can leave your eyes dry and irritated - especially if you wear contact lenses.

Week 35

This week, your baby is standing tall at about 20 inches. Fetal brain development has also gained momentum. But don't worry, the head's still soft enough to allow an easy exit through the birth canal. Now that your baby is head-down in preparation for delivery, chances are your bladder's leaking a little every time you sneeze or cough or laugh! Whatever you do, don't cut back on fluids! To improve your body's holding power, do pelvic-floor exercises as they help strengthen your pelvic muscles now and postpartum.

Week 36

The baby is now about 6 pounds and 20 inches long, with soft bones and cartilage to allow a safe exit. Most systems (from circulatory to musculoskeletal) are ready for prime time, though the digestive system will kick into gear at the first suckle. You are doing the full-term pregnancy waddle, the result of hormone-triggered loosening and softening of connective tissue. This is your body's way of getting ready to squeeze a big baby out of a small space.

Week 37

Finally, you've got a full-term baby, even with three weeks to go. But it's not done growing yet. You may not be sensing the kicking as much as the stretching, rolling and wiggling. Your body is

going through its own preparations for childbirth as your doctor starts looking for signs of labour- the baby's position in relation to your pelvis (engagement) and whether effacement (thinning of the cervix) and dilation (opening of the cervix) have begun. She may also determine whether your cervix has begun to soften and move to the front of the vagina. These processes can occur gradually (over a period of weeks or even a month or more).

Week 38

Foetal development is nearly complete including shedding the skin-protecting vernix and lanugo. Its also producing more surfactant, a substance that prevents the air sacs in the lungs from sticking to one another once breathing starts. The foetus continues to add fat and fine-tune the brain and nervous system. Your body is now getting the milk machine up and running. Part of the process is producing colostrum, the precursor to breast milk.

Week 39

The brain of your is still growing at an astonishing rate, a pace that will continue for the first three years of life. The pink skin has now turned whitish. The head may have dropped into your pelvis by now, which makes breathing easier but walking harder for you. Watch for giveaway signs: Braxton Hicks contractions; rupture of the membranes; loss of the mucous plug and the bloody show. Labour could be any time now.

Week 40

Your baby weights anywhere from 6 to 8 pounds and measures between 19 and 22 inches now. The bones in the skull haven't fused yet to make it easier to get through the birth canal. There is enough fat now under the skin to maintain body temperature outside. Your placenta is still providing the antibodies needed to fight off infections for the first six months. And lo and behold the little one is all set to pop out and make his or her entry into your lives and change it forever. Nothing will ever be the same. Welcome to parenthood.