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# Your baby's movements in pregnancy

## Maternity Unit



Patient Information

## About this leaflet

This leaflet provides information to help you understand your baby's movements during pregnancy. It might also be useful if you have concerns that you have not been feeling your baby move as much as usual or the pattern of movements have changed.

It tells you about:

- what are normal movements for your baby
- what affects how much you feel your baby move
- what you should do if your baby's movements have reduced or changed
- what care you will be offered if your baby's movements have reduced or changed

## When will you start to feel your baby moving?

Most women are first aware of their baby's movements at around 18-24 weeks pregnant. If this is your first pregnancy it may be after 20 weeks that you first feel your baby move. If you have been pregnant before, you may feel movements as early as 16 weeks.

## References:

1. NICE CG62 (2017) – Antenatal Care for uncomplicated pregnancies
2. RCOG Green-top Guideline No. 57 (2011) Reduced fetal movements
3. Tommy's & NHS England (Jan 2016) Feeling your baby move is a sign that they are well

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## Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email [asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net). If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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## From 24 weeks pregnant

Contact the Surrey Heartlands Pregnancy Advice Line on 0300 123 5473 immediately who will arrange for you to be seen in the Maternity Assessment Centre.

You will have a full antenatal check-up that includes checking the size of your uterus, measuring your blood pressure and testing your urine for protein. Depending on your stage of pregnancy your baby's heartbeat will be checked with a handheld Doppler, Cardiotocograph (CTG) or Ultrasound Scan.

### **What if my baby's movements are reduced again?**

If you have further concerns about your baby's movements, even if you have had a previous check-up, you must *contact the Surrey Heartlands Pregnancy Advice Line on 0300 123 5473 immediately*.

**NEVER HESITATE** to seek advice no matter how many times this happens.

### **What does it feel like when your baby moves?**

Baby movements in the womb, also known as fetal movements or 'kicks' have been described as a flutter, kick, swish or roll. The type of movement may change as your pregnancy progresses.

### **What are normal movements for your baby in pregnancy?**

There is no set number of normal movements you should be feeling – every baby is different. It is important that you get to know how your baby moves.

As your baby grows, both the number and type of movements will change with your baby's activity pattern. From 18-24 weeks the number of movements will increase until 32 weeks of pregnancy and then stay about the same, although the type of movement may change as you get nearer to your due date.

- It is **NOT TRUE** that babies move less towards the end of pregnancy
- You should **CONTINUE** to feel your baby move right up to the time you go into labour and during labour.

**DO NOT WAIT** until the next day to seek advice if you are worried about your baby's movements.

Contact the Surrey Heartlands Pregnancy Advice Line on 0300 123 5473 immediately.

## **Why is it important to be aware of your baby's movements?**

Feeling your baby move is a sign that they are well. If you notice your baby is moving less or you notice a change in the pattern of movements it may be a sign that your baby is unwell.

It is important that you get the right treatment at the right time if you have any concerns regarding your baby's movements.

Contact the Surrey Heartlands Pregnancy Advice Line on 0300 123 5473 immediately.

## **What factors can affect you feeling your baby move?**

You are less likely to be aware of your baby's movements when you are active or busy.

If your placenta is at the front of your uterus (womb), it may not be so easy for you to feel your baby's movements. Your baby lying head down or bottom first will not affect whether you can feel it move. If your baby's back is lying at the front of your uterus, you may feel fewer movements than if their back is lying alongside your own back.

Do not assume that the baby's position is why you cannot feel your baby's movements. If you think your baby's movements have slowed down, stopped or changed contact the Surrey Heartlands Pregnancy Advice Line on 0300 123 5473 immediately.

## **How can you monitor your baby's movements?**

There is not enough evidence to recommend the routine use of movement charts. It is important to get to know how your baby moves.

Do not use a home Doppler, hand-held monitor, or phone app to check your baby's wellbeing. Even if you think you have detected a heartbeat this does not mean that your baby is well.

If you have concerns about your baby's movements this should be checked by a health professional.

Contact the Surrey Heartlands Pregnancy Advice Line on 0300 123 5473 immediately.

## **What happens if your baby's movements have slowed down?**

### Less than 24 weeks pregnant:

If by 24 weeks of pregnancy you have not felt your baby move at all you should contact your midwife who will arrange for your baby's heartbeat to be checked.