

Understanding Your Pregnancy Journey

Preparing Mind and Body for Expecting Mothers



I need to take adequate nutrients, including folic acid and iodine, to give my growing baby a head start.



Online Version



Department of Health

Early Pregnancy

- At around 4-5 weeks, relying on my nutrient intake, the brain, spinal cord and heart of my baby start to evolve.
- Baby's heartbeat can be detected on ultrasound at around 6-7 weeks. All major organs and body systems have started to develop.
- At 10 weeks, the heart is now fully formed. It beats at around 180 times a minute which is much faster than my own heart rate.



4-8 weeks



- I may start to have nausea and vomiting, especially in the mornings. Frequent small meals help alleviating my symptoms. During this time, my breasts are becoming bigger and I would need a supportive bra.
- As baby grows, my uterus presses against my bladder causing me a frequent urge to urinate.

Mid-Pregnancy

- My baby starts to hear and become sensitive to light at 15 weeks.
- From 18 weeks onwards, I may start to feel my baby's movements, which is like soft fluttering sensation.
- At 28 weeks, my baby's brain and digestive systems are formed but not fully mature. He/She can respond to touch and sound.



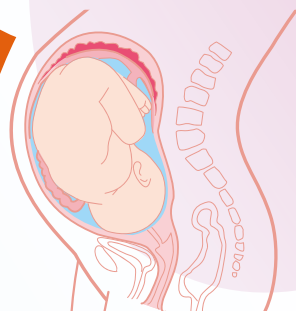
18-24 weeks



- I may notice a dark line down the middle of my tummy, which is a normal change in skin pigmentation.
- Stretch marks may develop as my tummy gets big quickly. These stretch marks can also extend to my breasts and thighs. Indigestion or heartburn are common at this stage. I may feel hungry more easily than before. I should maintain a sensible, balanced diet to avoid excessive weight gain. I may also become tired easily and experience swelling in my face, hands and feet.

Late Pregnancy

- At 29-36 weeks, my baby continues to be very active with stretching and kicking movements, also he/she may have hiccups. The eyes can open and close, and they can sense changes in light. The bones become harder, but the skull remains soft and flexible to prepare for the delivery.
- By 35 weeks, my baby is usually lying with his/her head downwards.
- The lungs are maturing and getting ready to breathe independently outside the uterus at 36 weeks.



37-40 weeks

From 37 weeks onwards, my baby starts descending into the pelvis and he/she is considered fully matured (full term); labour contractions can occur at any time.



- As my baby grows, I may feel short of breath due to pressure on my lungs. I may also experience frequent urges to pass urine. The load on my spine and pelvis may also increase back pain. At night, I may experience leg cramps, making it difficult to sleep.
- I may feel irregular tightening of my uterus – known as Braxton-Hicks contraction, which is a normal part of late pregnancy. However, if I have more frequent, regular and painful contractions, or if there is any leaking or a show, I should consult my doctor or go to the hospital immediately.

Leaflet content will be updated from time to time. For the latest information, please refer to the website of the Family Health Service of the Department of Health.



Family Health Service

Website : www.fhs.gov.hk

24-hour Information Hotline : 2112 9900

FHS-MH127A

Printed Feb 2025