Patient Information: Fetal Movement

Island Health

Why are baby's movements important?

Your baby's movements are a sign of their well-being. Most babies develop their own pattern of movement during pregnancy. Becoming familiar with your baby's normal pattern can help you notice any important changes.

What is normal?

- Every baby is different.
- Movements may include kicks, rolls, flutters, or stretches.
- As your pregnancy progresses, movements may feel stronger, more regular, or patterns may change.
- You should still feel regular movement right up to labour.

When will I start to feel movement?

- Most people will start to feel movement between **16–24 weeks**.
- If this is your first pregnancy, it may be closer to **20–24 weeks**.

How often should my baby move?

- There is **no exact number** of movements that is "normal."
- What matters most is recognizing your baby's **usual patterns**.



What is a fetal movement or 'kick count'?

If you are concerned or your care provider recommends it:

- Choose a time when your baby is usually active (often evening).
- Sit or lie on your side in a quiet place.
- Count movements (kicks, rolls & flutters).
- Most babies will have **6 movements** within **2 hours**. An increase in fetal movement is never a concern.

When should I be concerned?

Contact your healthcare provider **right away** (or go to Labour & Delivery) if:

- You are worried about your baby's movements at any time.
- You notice a **decrease** in your baby's usual movements.

Trust your instincts - you know your baby best.

Important reminders:

- Home dopplers or apps are **not reliable** for checking your baby's well-being.
- Always contact your care provider if you are unsure.

Changes in your baby's movements can be an early sign that your baby needs attention.
Prompt assessment can make the difference.



What should I do if movements seem reduced?

1. Lie down on your side in a quiet place.
2. Focus on your baby's movements and observe for changes in movements or activity.
3. If you are still concerned, **seek care immediately**.
4. **Do not wait** until the next day to get checked.