



Patient Information Leaflet (PIL)

Reduced Fetal Movements

My Baby's Movements

Feeling your baby move is a sign that they are well. When babies are unwell, they sometimes slow down their movements. This is to save energy. Call your maternity unit/hospital immediately if you have any concerns about your baby's movements and tell them you are coming in now for a check-up.

How often should my baby move?

You should start to feel your baby move around 16 to 20 weeks of pregnancy. A baby's movements can be described as anything from a kick, flutter, swish, or roll.

There's no set number of movements you should feel each day – every baby is different. Babies move all day with movements usually increasing in the evening. It's important to get to know what's normal for your baby (this is your baby's pattern of movement).

Babies do not run out of room or slow down towards the end of pregnancy.

Why are my baby's movements important?

No movement, less movement or kicks, weaker movements or kicks, or an unusual rapid increase in movement can be an early sign and sometimes the only warning sign that your baby needs to be checked at hospital. Most women who had a stillbirth noticed their baby's movements had changed. If your baby is unwell, there is a chance to save their life, if reported promptly.

Trust your gut instincts.

What should I do if my baby's movements stop, slow down, or are weaker?

Call and go to your maternity unit/hospital immediately if you notice any changes or feel concerned. You are not wasting their time. Don't wait until the next day, especially if you notice a change in movements in the evening. Don't wait until your next appointment.

What happens when I come into the maternity unit/hospital?

When you come in for a check-up (staff are available 24 hours, 7 days a week) investigations may include:

- Checking and monitoring your baby's heartbeat
- Ultrasound scan to measure your baby's growth and wellbeing
- Urine and blood tests

In most cases, the results will show that your baby is fine, and you will go home. If the results show that your baby needs extra monitoring, you will be admitted.

Do not leave until you are happy with your baby's movements. Do not go home if you are not feeling reassured or have any concerns. You know your baby best.

Common questions

Can I make my baby move?

No. Call and go to your maternity unit/hospital immediately. Do not delay getting checked by drinking cold water or eating something sugary to get your baby moving.

Can I use a home Doppler to check my baby's heartbeat?

No. Call and go to your maternity unit/hospital immediately. Do not use handheld monitors, Dopplers, or phone apps to check your baby's heartbeat. Even if you detect a heartbeat, this does not mean your baby is well.

What if I notice a change in my baby's movements again?

Call and go to your maternity unit/hospital immediately. You're always doing the right thing by getting your baby checked. Even if everything was fine last time, your baby must be checked again. Your baby might require additional monitoring, or you might be admitted.

Where can I get more information?

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=YQUHSXvGQ30>

<https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/pregnancy-symptom-checker/baby-fetal-movements>