

CHANGES DURING PREGNANCY

Pregnancy is a time of many physical and emotional changes for the mother. You probably want to know more about these changes and what is happening to your growing baby. You may notice that your feelings about yourself, others and the baby will change often. This is normal. The following is a short list of changes which both mother and baby will undergo.

First Trimester

Experience of Mother	Changes	Development of the Baby
<p>The First Trimester first three months <i>These are called the months of adjustment - to the idea of being a mother, of having a child or, perhaps, of having another child.</i></p> <p>No menstruation* (period); Sleepiness; Frequent urination; Nausea; Fullness and tingling in the breasts.</p> <p>You may be able to feel the top of the fundus, the upper rounded portion of your uterus, about one third of the way between the pubic bone and the navel.*</p>	<p>Changes occur in the cervix, which you will note as a vaginal discharge.</p> <p>Breasts get bigger and darkening of the nipples and areola* on breasts occurs.</p> <p>May experience mood swings.</p> <p>By the end of 12 weeks of pregnancy, the enlarging uterus begins to rise out of the pelvic cavity. Uterus is now the size of a grapefruit.</p>	<p>End of one month: The baby is 1/4 inch long and one third the length is its head. Spine, spinal cord and digestive system are developing. By the 25th day, the heart is beating.</p> <p>End of two months: The baby's face is formed. There are arm and leg "buds" with rudimentary fingers and toes. External genitals begin to form, and the baby is now 1/2 inch long.</p> <p>End of third month: The baby is 3 inches long and weighs about 1 ounce. Placenta is producing the hormones needed to maintain pregnancy. Fingers and toes can be seen.</p>

Second Trimester

Experience of Mother	Changes	Development of the Baby
<p>The Second Trimester</p> <p><i>This is called the trimester of acceptance and planning. Mothers usually feel wonderful physically. This means the whole body is working more efficiently. There is quickening – mother can feel the baby move.</i></p> <p>Striae, stretch marks on the abdomen, are seen.</p> <p>May have constipation* and gastric upsets –signs of increasing pressure of the uterus on the digestive organs. <i>Important to drink more fluids and eat more fruits and vegetables.</i></p> <p>Tired legs and occasional swollen ankles are experienced. <i>Raise your legs whenever possible.</i></p>	<p>The uterus is increasing in size. More blood vessels are being created to supply the new tissue, which is adapted muscularly for the job of labor.</p> <p>The same is true in the cervix. Mobility of the pelvis is gradually increasing.</p>	<p>End of fourth month (16 weeks):</p> <p>The baby is covered with lanugo* (fine hair) and vernix* (a protective coating). The baby is 6 inches long, and weighs about 4 ounces.</p> <p>End of fifth month (20 weeks):</p> <p>The baby's movements may soon be felt.</p> <p>There is hair on the head.</p> <p>The heartbeat can be heard with fetoscope.</p> <p>Uterine contractions* (Braxton Hicks*) may become noticeable.</p> <p>Baby is 10-12 inches long, and weighs 1/2 to 1 pound.</p> <p>End of sixth month (24 weeks):</p> <p>Fat deposits begin to form under the baby's skin.</p> <p>Baby will attempt to breathe if born.</p> <p>Baby is 11 to 14 inches long, and weighs 1 1/2 pounds.</p>

Third Trimester

Experience of Mother	Changes	Development of the Baby
<p>The Third Trimester <i>The main discomforts for most mothers result from increased pressure on muscles, nerves and blood vessels in the abdomen, pelvic cavity and legs. The enlarged uterus and heavier baby cause the pressure. Mothers feel shortness of breath as the top of the uterus presses upward.</i></p> <p>Leg cramps, tired legs, and, possibly, varicose veins occur.</p> <p>Occasional dizziness or feelings of lightheadedness occur. This is due to changes in circulation from pressure and vessel constrictions that momentarily affect the oxygen supply to the brain.</p> <p>With lightening, or settling of the baby low in the uterus, there is a return of frequent urination, possible constipation. <i>Good nutrition is important.</i></p> <p>The last part of the third trimester can be the most exciting, uncertain, and "high" period of a woman's life.</p>	<p>Uterine contractions increase and the mother may experience false labor (Braxton Hicks) contractions during the last four to six weeks before delivery.</p> <p>Discharges from glands of the cervix and vagina are enough to form a cork of mucus in the cervix. It keeps bacteria out, and may be dislodged before, or with the beginning of "true" labor. This is referred to as expulsion of the mucus plug.* The uterus is at the sternum (breast-bone) by the 36th week. Shortness of breath may occur.</p> <p>In the last month, the uterus lowers as baby settles into the birth position. This is "dropping" or "lightening."</p> <p>There is softening and increased elasticity of tissue in the cervix, vagina, and pelvic floor.</p> <p>Colostrum* discharge is increasing from breasts. <i>Wash with plain water as needed.</i></p>	<p>Seven months (28 weeks): The baby can open eyes. It looks red and wrinkled. It is 14-17 inches long and weighs 2-3 pounds.</p> <p>Eight months (32 weeks): Baby is acquiring a nice layer of fat under the skin. Loses some of the downy hair covering the skin. Has fingernails longer than fingertips. If it's a boy, his testicles descend into the scrotum.</p> <p>Nine months (36-42 weeks) Birth: Baby probably will weigh 7 to 7 1/2 pounds and be 18 to 20 inches long.</p>