



Fetal Movement

While most pregnancy people start to feel baby move between 16-20 weeks, healthy pregnancies should be aware of the importance of feeling the baby move every day starting at 26 weeks. A moving baby is a well-baby.

What is a movement?

A roll, a kick, a punch, a shift: all qualify as movements!

Do I need to check every day?

For healthy pregnancies, you should feel your baby move every day. Some babies are more active in the evening, some in the morning and usually we notice when we are not distracted! Unless your health provider has asked you to do daily fetal movement counts, you can go about your day as usual.

What if I become worried that I have not felt baby move?

There is a preliminary check for “fetal movement count.” This involves going away from distractions, laying on your side, and feeling for 6 movements in 2 hours. If you get 6 movements in 10 minutes you can stop!

If you were not to get 6 movements **OR** you feel a big change in baby movement from their typical activity level, this would warrant hospital assessment.

Why 2 hours?

Babies sleep in 20–40-minute periods and rarely exceed 90 minutes so we allow for 2 hours to feel movement.

Does strength matter?

The more important factor is movement and not the strength of the movements. As babies grow bigger, and become more set in position, they have less ability for big movements and more shifts.

Should I drink something sugary to get baby to move?

While babies may certainly respond to a sugar drink or food, healthy babies should be moving regardless of what you are eating. Therefore, it is not recommended to drink a sugar drink before a “fetal movement count.”

Taken from: Society of Gynecologists and Obstetricians CPG No. 441: Antenatal Fetal Health Surveillance (2023), JOGC Kick-Starting Action: Canadian Women's Understanding of Fetal Movements (2013).