



NEW BEGINNINGS . . .

a newsletter dedicated to the pregnant family.

No. 2

Weeks 13-21 of Pregnancy

Physical Changes and Concerns

This is the second in a series of seven newsletters. Common questions and concerns about your pregnancy are discussed. This newsletter will focus on weeks 13-21 of your pregnancy. Be sure to check with your health care providers for any further information concerning this exciting time in your life.

Breasts

Proper support of the breasts is important. This is true whether you plan to breast or bottle feed. Proper support will make you feel more comfortable. It will also help the breasts keep its shape and prevent back strain. It is an old wives' tale that breastfeeding causes sagging breasts. The problem is a result of lack of support. This causes tissues to sag. A good support bra will help.

Look for these qualities in a good bra:

- 1) Straps are wide and non-elastic.
- 2) **All** breast tissue fits comfortably in the bra cup.
- 3) The bra should fit comfortably snug – but should not cut into your skin leaving breast tissue to hang over the sides.
- 4) The nipple line should be located midway between the elbow and the shoulder. The back of the bra should remain below the shoulder blades.
- 5) The bra cup should **never** be lined with plastic. (This holds in moisture and can lead to infection and cracking of the nipples).

Uterus

By 20 weeks, your uterus is at the level of your navel (belly button). It is bigger than the size of a grapefruit. You should be able to feel your baby's movement during this time.

Headaches

Headaches may be more common during this period of pregnancy. They are frequently mild. Usually no cause can be found. Check with your health care provider for acceptable pain relief methods.

Backaches

Your uterus is growing. This makes your center of gravity shift. Good posture during pregnancy is helpful. Wearing shoes with moderate heels will help prevent backaches. Two exercises that help relieve back discomfort are tailor sitting and pelvic rock.

Tailor sitting strengthens the muscles of the outer hips and relieves pubic joint pain. Sit on the floor and place the soles of your feet together. Let your knees fall out to each side and bring your feet in as close to the pelvis as is comfortable. Gently press your knees toward the floor without bouncing and hold for several slow deep breaths, then relax. Repeat the stretch-relax cycle several times, then relax and remain in this seated position as long as it is comfortable.



Pelvic rock focuses on a back and forth motion which stretches the muscles of the upper back and hips. Get on your hands and knees with shoulders centered above your hands and hips above your knees. Inhale and rock forward so your shoulders are slightly forward of your wrists. Exhale and rock back so that your hips move over your heels, lower your chin towards your chest without arching your back, and spread your shoulder blades wide apart. Continue this slow rocking movement, inhaling as you move forward and exhaling as you move back.



Emotional Changes

Body Image

Pregnancy brings about major changes in the woman's body. These changes cause a difference in the way the pregnant woman looks at her body. These changes are normal, but they may be a cause of concern for you. They may be a source of stress. Expecting changes and discussing them with your partner may help.

It is not unusual for the enthusiastic first time mother to begin wearing maternity clothes at the beginning of the fourth month of pregnancy. This announces to the world her good news.

Weeks 13-20

The highlight of the second trimester is feeling the baby move (quickening). This usually occurs around the 20th week of pregnancy. These movements can feel like little flutters. As the baby grows, they get stronger and feel more like a kick. Actually feeling the baby move may bring about great changes in you. You can now imagine your baby as a real person.

Emotionally, this is usually a calm period during your pregnancy. Overall a sense of well-being and happiness is present.

Prenatal Visits

Fathers are encouraged to go with their partners to the prenatal visits. This includes the father in what is going on with his baby. It also provides a chance for him to ask questions and talk about concerns that may be important to him.

Family Relationships



Toddlers at Home

If a toddler is going to be moved from the crib to an adult bed, it should be done soon. Usually this move should be made by the 24th week of pregnancy. Be sure to build it up as a positive experience... "You are a big boy/girl now." Seeds of jealousy can be planted if they are moved because "the baby needs your bed." The same reason applies to starting a toddler in nursery school. He should be started during the pregnancy. If this is not possible, wait for about 6 months after the baby is born. He may feel unloved and rejected if he is sent off to school soon after the baby's birth.

Grandparents

Most grandparents are happy at the prospect of a new baby in the family. However, some grandparents may see it as a reminder that they are getting older. Some will use subtle means to lower the self esteem of the new parents. Grandmothers may talk of their horrible pregnancies. Grandfathers may talk of the high cost of rearing children.

The excitement shown by most grandparents is the result of many memories ... their own youth ... the excitement of giving birth ... delight in their own children. They set up a memory bank of "firsts" for the new infant ... first smile ... first word ... first step. These are later used to claim the newborn as a member of the family.

Daddy

As mentioned before, feeling the baby move is a high point in the pregnancy. It also carries an important meaning for your partner. Some men can spend hours watching and touching the mother's abdomen. The father may imagine what is happening inside. He may dream about things he would like to say to the baby. This is all helping him form a tie with his baby.

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Nutrition and Physical Changes



Low weight gain during pregnancy increases the risk of low birthweight babies. Poor diet has an effect on the baby's brain growth. This will lead to problems with learning. Some women eat less because they think it is easier to have a small baby. The real concern should be the growth of the baby. There should be **NO** dieting during pregnancy. The recommended weight gain is 3-5 lbs. for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. The woman should gain about 1 lb. per week for the rest of the pregnancy. A weight gain of 25 to 35 lbs. is recommended. If you are carrying twins, weight gain should be higher. If you are underweight or overweight,

follow your health care provider's instructions.

The baby needs calcium and iron to develop. Calcium is needed for the normal growth of bones and teeth of the baby. Some common foods that have calcium include: milk, cheese, ice cream, and yogurt. Iron is needed to carry oxygen in the blood for you and your baby. Foods richest in iron are red meats, dried beans, green leafy vegetables, whole grain or enriched breads and cereals, and dried fruits.

An average diet often contains too little iron. Your health care provider will usually prescribe a vitamin and mineral supplement that contains iron. However, do not stop eating iron-rich foods. Vitamins with iron may cause nausea in some women. Iron pills should be taken following meals while the stomach has food in it. Taking iron with orange juice will help the iron be absorbed better. Iron supplements may cause constipation in some women. For this reason, make sure to drink more fluids and eat more fiber rich foods. Iron may turn the stools black. This is normal.

Prenatal Danger Signals

- **Premature Labor** is labor which begins before the 37th week of pregnancy. Infants born before the 37th week may not be ready for life outside the womb. Symptoms include:

1. Abdominal/menstrual-like cramps
2. Lower back discomfort
3. Fluid leaking from the vagina. This could be bleeding or leaking of the fluid that surrounds the baby.
4. Pelvic pressure

*It is difficult to determine if you are in premature labor. Contact your health care provider immediately if **ANY** of the symptoms are present.*

To decrease your chances of having preterm labor:

1. Drink plenty of water
2. Keep your bladder empty
3. Report signs of infection early

- **Pre-eclampsia** (Toxemia) is a condition connected with high blood pressure. Its cause is unknown.

Common symptoms include:

1. Severe, frequent, or continuous headaches
2. Blurring or double vision
3. Seeing spots before your eyes
4. Severe or unusual abdominal pain

*If you have any **one** or a mixture of these symptoms, contact your doctor at once.*

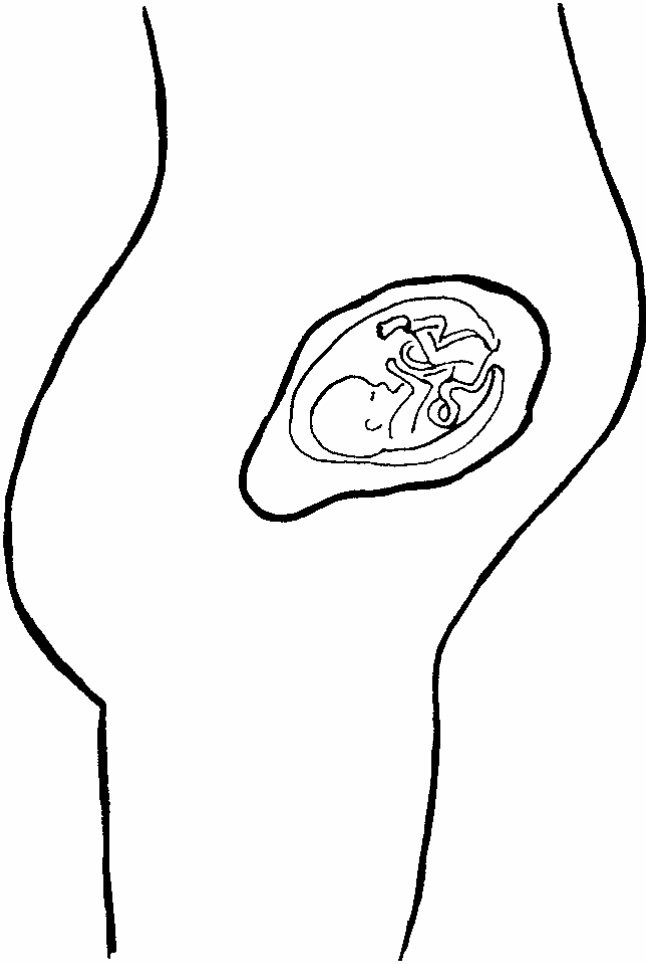
- **Infections:** Contact your health care provider if you have any of the following:
 1. Chills
 2. Fever
 3. Burning on urination
 4. Sores on the labia (the lips covering the vagina)
 5. Sores in the vagina
 6. Foul smelling discharge from the vagina
- **Fetal Movement:** If you notice a change in how often your baby is moving contact your doctor. This is especially true if the baby's movement decreases.
- **Vomiting** after the first three months or severe vomiting at any time indicates a possible problem. Contact your doctor.

Safety and Prevention

- **Seat Belts** should be used by all pregnant women. Wear the lap belt low on the abdomen.
 - **RhoGam** Rh negative women may receive an injection of RhoGam around the 28th week of pregnancy. This is to prevent possible problems in the newborn. The RhoGam will be given again after delivery if the baby is Rh positive. This helps prevent problems with the next pregnancy.
 - **Glucose Tolerance Test (GTT)** is recommended for each pregnant woman between 24-30 weeks. This is a screening test for diabetes. Blood will be drawn one hour after you drink a sugar solution.
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Growth and Development

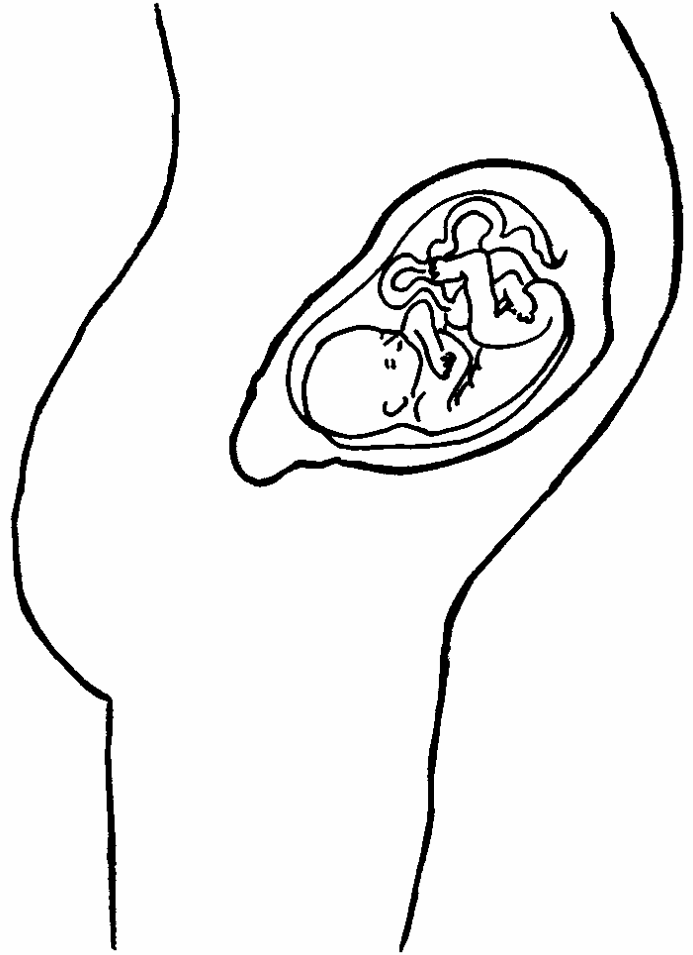
13-16 Weeks



13-16 Weeks

- period of very rapid growth
- at end of 16 weeks- your baby is about 4 oz. and 6" in length
- brain is rapidly developing
- bones are hardening
- hair is growing on head
- can suck his thumb, swallow, stick out his upper lip
- is able to grasp

17-20 Weeks



17-20 Weeks

- weighs about 1 lb. and about 10" long
- legs are now in proportion to rest of body
- movements are more frequent and stronger
- movements may be felt by the mother
- enamel is being deposited for the teeth
- eyelashes and eyebrows are forming
- your baby's heart beat can now be heard with a stethoscope
- your baby may have hiccups