

An Ultimate Guide to Your Growing Baby **2**

MH takes you on a week-by-week guide on your 40-week pregnancy journey.

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The span from week 13 to week 27 of pregnancy is called the "honeymoon period" for good reason: Typically, nausea subsides, emotions even out, and your sex drive returns. It's also the time when you'll start to feel the baby's first movements. Read on to find about the other changes that are in store.

The Second Trimester

Week 13

Baby

Baby is now able to swallow and urinate into the amniotic fluid.

All the vital organs are formed and are functional. From here on they will grow in size and efficiency.

Mummy

This is the turning point that you have been waiting for. The nausea would have left and you would be eating well again. You don't feel as tired and light-headed and it is possible to resume some exercises which also help to improve energy levels.

You will notice some pigmentation or darkening of the nipples and there would be a dark line running down the tummy called the linea nigra. People around you will start to realise you are pregnant because you cannot hide that little bulge anymore.

Week 14

Baby

The placenta begins proper function and the umbilical cord begins to take the role of blood circulation.

Baby now measures 10cm and weighs 45g.

Mummy

After making do with all the larger size and looser clothes you can find, you might want to consider shopping for some funky maternity wear.

Week 15

Baby

The neck is developed and the head is now able to turn freely.

The lungs improve their efficiency and there are tiny movements, which are practices for breathing.

Mummy

You would have a blood test to assess for risk of having a Down's Syndrome.

Some mothers can start to feel little flutters of baby movements.

You should try not to gain excessive weight now, as your appetite would be even better than normal! You should

remind yourself to stay away from unhealthy high calorie snacks like cookies and chocolates.

Week 16

Baby

Hand movements are refined and baby is now able to clench the fist and bend the fingers.

There is rapid growth in size and baby now measures 14cm and weighs 110g.

Mummy & Daddy

This is the appointment you have been waiting for. Your doctor will try to identify the gender of your baby!

It is fine either way but knowing if it is going to be a little boy or a little girl helps so much in bonding with your baby, both in your prayers and good thoughts throughout the day. Of course, you can now start shopping for more gender identifiable things as well!

Week 17

Baby

Baby begins to hear! The surrounding amniotic fluid helps the external sounds travel. At this time, the mother's heart, stomach and voice can be heard. However, these sounds may not be interpreted by the immature brain at.

Mummy

For mothers who are assessed to be at high risk of having Down's Syndrome babies, your doctor has scheduled your amniocentesis. This procedure comes with a small risk of miscarriage and you are anxious about this. Your partner and you have decided to go ahead with the test because you want to find out for sure if your baby is all right.

Week 18

Baby

Baby now hears sounds from the external environment, but in a muffled manner.

If a loud noise is made near the mother, the baby may be sensed to "jump".

Baby now weighs about 250g.

Mummy

You need larger bras! Those breasts are starting to enlarge and get engorged. Colostrum may start to form and you may notice these slightly cloudy fluids sometimes staining your garments. This is the stuff your baby's first meal is made of! The fluid is filled with nutrients and antibodies.

Week 19

Baby

The little buds that will become adult teeth begin to appear behind the structures that will become the milk teeth.

Baby is very active and is exploring the expanse of your tummy. But there are also very long sleep periods that help accelerate growth.

Mummy

Although your appetite is great, you can't seem to eat as much, as a heavy meal may cause heartburn. It would be advisable to keep your meals light and not to sit or lie down straight after a meal.

It would be good for you to take a stroll after every meal... window shopping for baby stuff at lunch and taking a stroll to get some fresh air and leg circulation after dinner.

Week 20

Baby

Hair begins to grow and the teeth are now in the jawbone.

Baby has a distinct and unique identity as the fingerprints are developed.

At this time, baby is half his final length but only about 12 per cent of the final weight at birth.

Mummy

Today would be the appointment for a detailed ultrasound scan. This scan aims to rule out serious structural abnormalities such as heart defects, skeletal anomalies, etc.

The various organ systems are shown to you and it is amazing to see the baby's insides as well!

You receive the good news today that the amnio results are normal and that baby does not have any chromosomal abnormality!

Week 21

Baby

Hair appears. A downy light hair called "lanugo" is in place to help baby maintain a constant body temperature. This hair would mostly have disappeared by the time of birth.

Mummy

For those of you who have not started using oils or creams to prevent stretch marks, you may start to notice them on your tummy, thighs and breasts.

You were told that they pale and fade after delivery but usually do not disappear altogether.

Week 22

Baby

The brain and all senses are developing very rapidly. Muscles are getting stronger

too and you can definitely feel this!

The chest muscles are getting baby ready for breathing actions and the lungs are maturing day by day.

Mummy

You see some dilated blood vessels on your legs. These varicose veins are common during pregnancy as the pressure in the tummy hinders blood as they return from the legs to the heart.

Dilated blood vessels also develop elsewhere, such as piles, which tend to bleed if stools are not kept soft and regular; and congested vulva, which gives an uncomfortable engorged swollen feeling.

Week 23

Baby

Your baby is producing the amniotic fluid that is surrounding him and also swallowing it back. This swallowing action sometimes results in a cough or hiccups, which can be felt by the mum. They are transient, regular, almost pulsatile movements, which can be mistaken for a heartbeat.

Mummy

Baby is getting heavier and that stretchy feeling in the groin can be quite unbearable! Particularly for mothers who have delivered vaginally before, the ligaments are now starting to loosen up and there is a sore wobbly feeling when you are walking or when you suddenly stand after sitting for a while.

This ligament strain behaves like an old ankle sprain injury—once stretched, the ligaments are "weakened" and more prone to further injuries.

Week 24

Baby

Hearing is now developed and acute. External sounds can be heard really

well and exposing baby to calming soothing music may help those sounds to register and provide a sense of security even after birth.

Baby now measures 30cm and weighs 650g.

Mummy

Antenatal classes would have started. You haven't attended any kind of class for a while but you are determined to ace this class and pick up as many parenting skills as you can!

Week 25

Baby

Vernix, a white oily, creamy substance coats the body and protects the skin from being soaked in amniotic fluid. This fluid increases in acidic content with more urine input from the baby. The vernix will mostly dissolve by the time of delivery but enough of it will remain and help to lubricate as baby negotiates the birth canal on the way out.

Mummy & Daddy

Both mummy and daddy can now feel baby's movements! It's a great joy for daddy who can now feel the movements through your tummy.

Week 26

Baby

During this week, baby's eyes will begin to open and even blink. If baby were to be born now, there would be a 50 per cent chance of survival with proper medical care.

Baby now weighs 850g.

Mummy

Leg cramps seem to appear more frequently. This may be due to circulation changes and water retention. It could also be due to inadequate water intake. Many pregnant women



drink less water to avoid frequent visits to the bathroom and this can lead to dehydration.

Week 27

Baby

Baby opens eyes periodically. Eyebrows and eyelashes are in place!

Mummy

As you increase in weight, and this weight is mostly in the front of your body, take care not to arch your back more and more. This would result in muscle

spasm and backaches. Posture is very important at this stage. Remember always to encourage a slight forward pelvic tilt and to pick things by bending the legs rather than the back.

Week 28


Baby

Baby now manages regular rhythmic breathing movements.

Little boys have their testicles descend into the scrotum.

Baby measures 35cm and weighs about 1200g.

Mummy

As baby gets heavier, the weight of the womb may compress on your large blood vessels and impede circulation back to the baby. As such, it is beneficial to sleep sideways. The water comfortably buffers baby so there is no worry about "squashing" the baby! 

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