

## MY BABY'S MOVEMENTS



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Since about five months of pregnancy, you can feel your baby move in you. This is always a reassuring sign indicating that your baby is healthy and doing well.

Each baby moves differently. Your baby may move more or less than other babies. Also, your baby's movements may change from day to day.

As you get closer to the birth, your baby will continue to move, and it is important that you always feel the movements.

### WHAT AFFECTS THE MOVEMENTS THAT I FEEL?

Many factors affect the movements that you feel, for example:

- **The time of the day:** Movements are best perceived in the early evening.
- **Your position:** You feel movements better if you are lying down or sitting than if you are standing up.
- **Smoking:** Baby's movements decrease temporarily.
- **Exercise:** Baby's movements should not be affected by physical activities.
- **Food:** Contrary to popular beliefs, food or sweet drinks do not increase baby's movements.
- **Medication:** The majority of medications do not affect baby's movements. A few exceptions include anti-depressants and narcotics, which are associated with a decrease in movements.

### IF MY BABY MOVES LESS THAN USUAL, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you notice that your baby is moving less than usual, it is important to determine the cause. Often, it is simply because you have been very busy and have not paid as much attention to your baby's movements. However, sometimes, a decrease in movements might indicate that your baby needs to be assessed to determine how he is doing.

You can do a simple test at home to determine if your baby is moving enough. This test is called **Fetal Movement Count (FMC)**.

### HOW DO I DO THE FETAL MOVEMENT COUNT?

- Sit comfortably, or lie down on your side (preferably in the **early evening**).
- Concentrate so you can feel and count the number of distinct movements.
- Count until you have felt 6 movements.
- Note the time required to feel the 6 movements.
- If you feel less than 6 movements in 2 hours, notify your doctor/midwife, and/or go to the Family Birthing Center's triage unit for further assessments.

*If you notice that your baby moves significantly less or has stopped moving for a few hours, notify your doctor/midwife and go to the hospital immediately.*

#### USE THIS CHART TO NOTE YOUR COUNTS

Date	Start time	Indicate each movement						End time	Duration
		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
<i>Example:</i> Feb.10	6:30 pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6:55 pm	25 min.

Adapted from the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (2007). *Fetal Health Surveillance: Antepartum and Intrapartum Consensus Guidelines*.