



FIRST TRIMESTER

Baby Kicks: When to Start Counting and Why

Feeling your baby move is a thrilling milestone, but it's also key for tracking their well-being. This guide offers practical steps for counting kicks to ensure your baby's health during pregnancy.

A free guide from maternity.app

Feeling your baby move is a thrilling milestone, but it's also a vital biological indicator. Tracking these movements gives you a daily window into your baby's well-being.

Start Counting by Week 28.

Begin daily counts at 28 weeks, or at 26 weeks if your pregnancy is high-risk. The earlier you start, the better you can gauge your baby's movements.

Choose Your Timing.

- **Pick the right time.** Count when your baby is most active, typically after meals, physical activity, or during evening rest.
- **Get comfortable.** Sit comfortably or lie on your left side for optimal blood flow and placental perfusion.
- **Aim for 10 in 2.** Track how long it takes to feel 10 distinct movements. Most babies reach 10 within 30 minutes, but it shouldn't take longer than 2 hours.

- ☐ Start at Week 28: Begin daily counts at 28 weeks (or 26 weeks if high-risk).
- ☐ Pick the right time: Count when baby is most active (after meals or evening).
- ☐ Get comfortable: Sit or lie on your left side for better blood flow.
- ☐ Aim for 10 in 2: Feel 10 movements within 2 hours, ideally in 30 minutes.
- ☐ Document movements: Keep a daily log of your kick counts.
- ☐ Stay aware of patterns: Know your baby's usual activity levels.
- ☐ Contact your doctor: If you don't feel 10 movements within 2 hours.
- ☐ Watch for changes: Be alert to any sudden downturns in activity.

Understanding Your Baby's Movements.

ACOG and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine emphasize kick counts as they can indicate fetal distress or placental issues. Keep in mind that babies have sleep cycles lasting 20–40 minutes, so periods of inactivity are normal. However, you should easily perceive active moments.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR

Go to labor and delivery or contact your OB/GYN immediately if you do not feel 10 movements within 2 hours, or if there is a sudden change in your baby's movement pattern. Do not wait until the next day.

You're doing important work by tracking your baby's movements. Trust your instincts and reach out to your healthcare provider if something feels off. Your awareness can make a difference.