

Counting Fetal Movement

Monitoring your baby's well-being.



Why?

Counting your baby's movements in the third trimester is a proactive way to monitor your baby's well-being, specifically its reflexes and central nervous system. It is a good way to be assured that your baby is doing well and to notice if your baby is showing early signs of trouble.

A mother's awareness of fetal activity and reduced activity has been shown to be a great predictor of fetal risk. A baby that is compromised will decrease movements to reserve energy for vital life functions.

Common Concerns:

- ∞ Babies have regular times of sleep. Don't be alarmed if there are periods of little to no activity.
- ∞ Pick a time to count movements when your baby is normally active, or after a meal or physical activity.
- ∞ Baby's movement slows at the end of pregnancy. There will be less kicks and more rolls and stretches.

Why would you want to?

- ∞ Bonding with baby
- ∞ Partner can bond with baby
- ∞ Know your baby's pattern of behavior
- ∞ Improve your ability to notice a potential problem
- ∞ Be proactive about your baby's well-being

Notify your midwife right away if:

- *You feel less than 10 movements within 2 hours while you are counting*
- *You notice a sudden decrease of movements*
- *You have any doubts or fears about your baby's movements*

Your calls are important and welcome. Please do not feel like your call or text is inconveniencing your midwife.



Jen Jester, BSM, CPM
birthwisely@gmail.com
314-374-8901

www.birthwisely.com

How to count movements

Beyond 28 weeks

Every day at the SAME time:

- ∞ Choose an active time for your baby and follow the “Helpful Information” tips posted on this page
- ∞ Have your chart, pen and timer ready
- ∞ Recline with your feet up or lie on your left side
- ∞ Keep track of time from the first movement to the 10th
- ∞ Enter the movements on your chart
- ∞ Stop counting once you reach 10 movements or 2 hours
- ∞ If you did not notice 10 movements in 2 hours, call your midwife right away



Common Types of Movements

Movements that you may count:

- Kicks
- Jabs
- Turns
- Swishes
- Rolls
- Pokes

*Hiccups do NOT count as movements.



Your partner can connect with baby and count movements.

Helpful Information:

- ∞ A healthy baby has 10 movements in 2 hours
- ∞ Most often you notice 10 movements within 30 minutes
- ∞ Prepare to spend 30 minutes to 2 hours counting movements
- ∞ Prepare your body for action
 - Eat a meal
 - Drink plenty of water
 - Take a short walk
 - Using your fingers, push on your abdomen to encourage your baby to push back
- ∞ Practice counting movements at the same time every day

For more information and a helpful chart:

www.countthekicks.org

Reference:

Frye, A. (2013). *Holistic midwifery: A comprehensive textbook for midwives in homebirth practice*, Volume 1 care during pregnancy. Portland: Labrys Press.
King, T., Brucker, M., Kriebs, J., Fahey, J., Geger, C., Varney, H. (2015). *Varney's midwifery*. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.
Welcome to Count the Kicks! (n.d.). Retrieved March 26, 2015, from <http://www.countthekicks.org/>