
REFERENCES

Australian and New Zealand Stillbirth Alliance:
*Clinical Practice Guideline for the management of
women who report reduced foetal movements.*
Consultation Draft, September 2009.



**St George and Sutherland
Hospitals**

Baby's movements

*Important information for
women*

Baby's movements— important information for women

WHEN SHOULD I START TO FEEL MY BABY MOVE?

Most women will be aware of movements by about 20 weeks although it may be earlier if it is your second or subsequent baby. You may still have quiet days up until about 28 weeks of the pregnancy.

WHAT DO MOVEMENTS FEEL LIKE?

Movements may feel like kicks, stretches, pushes or sometimes you may be aware of hiccoughs. Movements are related to development of the baby's muscle and nervous system and are a good sign. Each baby has its own pattern of movement and it is important for you to become familiar with what is normal for your baby rather than comparing with someone else.

During the last few weeks of the pregnancy the movements may feel different due to there being less space in your uterus, but you should continue to feel movements right up until you start to labour.

Your midwife or doctor will be interested in your baby's movement patterns and will ask you to contact the hospital if you have any concerns about a change in pattern or frequency.

HOW OFTEN IS NORMAL?

After 28 weeks, women should feel scattered episodes of movements all through the day and evening. Babies will sleep for up to one hour but rarely longer than one and a half hours.

You may perceive less movements if:

- your placenta is situated at the front of your uterus
- you are overweight
- you have been very busy
- you are taking sedative medications, steroids, alcohol or other drugs
- you have reduced or increased fluid around the baby
- your baby is smaller than expected for your period of pregnancy

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK THE BABY HAS NOT MOVED AS MUCH AS NORMAL?

If you think that your baby's normal pattern of movements has changed or you have not felt the baby move during the day you should:

- sit down and focus on your baby
- gently touch your abdomen to see if the baby moves
- drink a glass or two of icy cold water to stimulate the baby to move. It is most useful to do this at a time of day that your baby normally moves the most.

After doing this, you should call if your baby moves **less than 10 times in 2 hours**.

WHEN ELSE SHOULD YOU CALL?

You should also call if:

- the baby moves less and less over a few days
- you have concerns about the baby's movements

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN YOU CALL?

The midwife will ask you a few questions and if there is any concern they will ask you to come to the hospital to assess your situation, listen to your baby's heartbeat and perform a CTG.

A CTG is a tracing of your baby's heart rate on a monitor and in most situations will provide reassurance that all is well. The CTG takes about 30-45 minutes to perform and in most women will be able to go home within 1-2 hours. If further investigations are recommended (such as an ultrasound) this will be discussed with you before you go home.

IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS LATER ON

If you have concerns with movements again after you have had a check-up, you should do exactly the same. We would always rather that you come in for a reassuring check than sit at home and worry.

WHO TO CALL?

If you have a nominated midwife, contact them first. Otherwise contact the Delivery Suite on:

- St George: 9113 2125, 9113 2126
 - Sutherland: 9540 7981, 9540 7982
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