

# Fetal Movement Counting

## What is fetal movement counting?

**Fetal movement counting**—sometimes called **kick counting**—involves counting the number of times you feel your baby move in the womb within a certain amount of time.

## Why do I need to count?

**Counting your baby's movements can help you and your doctor or midwife check on your baby's health.** A healthy, growing baby will move often. You may not notice it when you're busy, but you should be able to feel your baby's movements at other times. Counting fetal movements, as this handout describes, can help you know when your baby's activity is normal. It can also help you know when you should call your doctor or midwife to follow up.

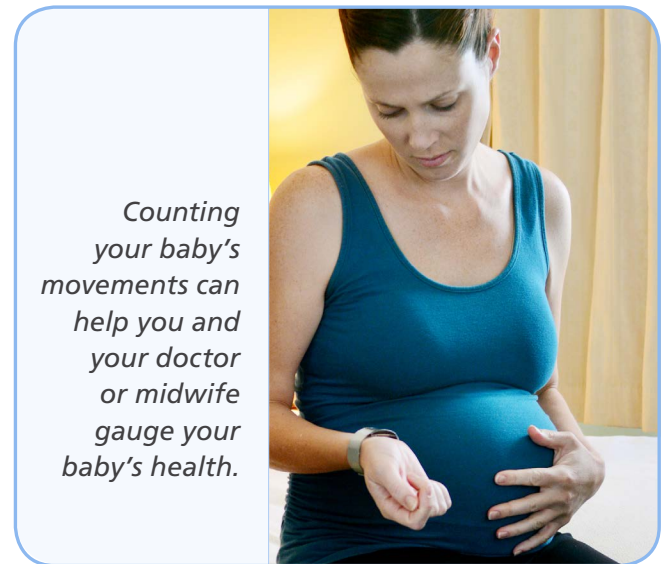
## When should I start counting?

Many doctors and midwives recommend that women begin counting fetal movements during the 28th week of their pregnancy. Women with high-risk pregnancies or with pregnancy complications are especially encouraged to count.

## How do I count?

There are different methods for counting fetal movements. Your doctor or midwife may prefer a special method for you—be sure to ask. One common method follows these steps:

**1 Choose a convenient time to count—at a time when your baby tends to be active.** Many women find that their babies are more active after a meal, after light physical activity, and in the evening. Try to count at about the same time each day. This will help you get a sense of your baby's usual patterns of activity.



- 2 Each day at the chosen time, lie on your side or sit in a comfortable chair.** Have a pen and paper handy. You may want use the back of this sheet to begin your daily record.
- 3 Write down the time you feel the first of your baby's movements and make a mark for each movement you feel after that.** Count each twist, turn, flutter, swish, kick, and elbow you feel. (You won't need to count hiccups.) Continue counting until you've marked 10 movements. Record the time of the 10th movement. Here's an example:

Today's date: 4/27/2017

Start time: 7:36 pm

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End time: 8:02 pm

- 4 If you don't feel 10 movements within 2 hours, GET MEDICAL CARE RIGHT AWAY.** If your doctor or midwife has given you a different target or counting method, follow those instructions. See the back page of this handout for more notes.

## What else should I know about fetal movement counting?

- Although the **target number** of movements is often a minimum of 10 movements in 2 hours, your doctor or midwife may set a different target number for your baby.
- It may take only a few minutes for you to count 10 movements (or your specific target number). This is normal. You can stop counting when you reach your target number.
- A sleeping baby may move less. If your baby seems to be sleeping or having a slow day, try going for a 5-minute walk.
- As you continue with daily counting, you may notice patterns in your baby's level of activity. Pay attention to these. **A change in your baby's usual activity may alert you to a possible problem.**
- Continue counting and recording fetal movements daily until your baby is born.



### When should I call my doctor?

**GET MEDICAL CARE RIGHT AWAY (go to the hospital Labor and Delivery department or call your doctor or midwife as instructed) if you:**

- Don't count the target number of movements (usually about 10 movements in 2 hours or less)
- Think your baby is moving far less than usual—for example, your baby is only half as active as usual
- Feel something isn't right

## My record of fetal movement counts

My doctor/midwife recommends this target:  
\_\_\_\_\_ movements in \_\_\_\_\_ hour(s).

I'll go to the hospital Labor and Delivery department or call my doctor/midwife immediately at \_\_\_\_\_ if this target count isn't met.

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