

Reporting reduced fetal movements. What should I expect?

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Are you worried about your baby's reduced movements?
This leaflet outlines the care that you should expect to receive,
depending on which stage of the pregnancy you are at.



Less than 24 weeks pregnant

Most women first become aware of their baby moving when they are 16–24 weeks pregnant. If by 24 weeks you have never felt your baby move, you should contact your midwife, who will check your baby's heartbeat. An ultrasound scan may be arranged and you may be seen by a specialist to check your baby's wellbeing if a problem is suspected.



Between 24 and 28 weeks pregnant

You should contact your midwife and they should see you the same day if possible. If they can't see you, they may refer you to the hospital maternity unit. Your baby's heartbeat will be checked and you will have a full check-up that should include:

1. checking the size of your baby by measuring your bump
2. checking your blood pressure
3. testing your urine for protein.

If your baby is smaller than expected, an ultrasound scan may be arranged to check on your baby's growth.



Over 28 weeks pregnant

You must contact your midwife or local maternity unit. You must not wait until the next day to seek help and you should be seen on the same day. If it is out of hours you may be asked to go to the labour ward and wait to be seen.

1. You will be asked about your baby's movements.
2. You will have an antenatal check-up, including checking your baby's heartbeat and measuring the size of your bump.
3. Your baby's heart rate will be monitored using a CTG, usually for at least 20 minutes.

You should not be discharged until you are happy with your baby's movements again.

You may also have an ultrasound scan if:

- your baby is smaller than expected
- your pregnancy has other factors that are associated with a higher risk of stillbirth.

The ultrasound scan is normally done within 24 hours.

These checks usually show that all is well. Most women who have one episode of reduction in their baby's movements go on to have a healthy baby.



What should I do if I find my baby's movements are reduced again?

When you go home you will be advised to keep an eye on your baby's movements. If your baby has another episode of reduced movements, you must contact your local maternity unit promptly. *Always contact your midwife or local maternity unit immediately, no matter how many times it happens. You are not being a nuisance.*



Do not be tempted to use a home doppler to check on the health of your baby at home. Even if you detect a heartbeat it does not mean your baby is well.

This leaflet is based on recommendations made by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists about treatment of women who go in with reported reduced fetal movements. It was developed by Tommy's and is endorsed by NHS England. If you are not offered the care detailed in this leaflet, discuss it with your healthcare provider.