



Movement or Kick Counts

Most mothers become aware of fetal movement around 18-21 weeks gestation. Even at this early stage, the number of movements a normal, healthy baby makes varies from mother to mother. Some babies move less than others. Some mothers feel more movements than other mothers. As your baby gets older and bigger and his/her home inside you gets smaller, the types of movements you feel usually change. Babies also normally have "nap" periods and they grow longer as you get closer to your due date. So how can you know when to be concerned that your baby is not moving enough? We recommend that you pay attention to fetal movements at least once a day after 28 weeks. It is not necessary to count every hour and you can count at any time of day. However, choose a time of the day when the baby tends to be more active (evening for many people). You should feel four or more movements in one hour. If you do not feel four fetal movements in one hour, we recommend that you encourage the baby to be more active. Drink a large glass of water or juice and eat a snack. Lie down on your side and count the movements again. If you still don't feel four fetal movements in one hour, please call our office.

Research has shown that babies whose mothers have chronic health problems, like a heart condition, high blood pressure, or insulin-dependent diabetes, have more problems during their pregnancies. In these cases fetal movement counting has been shown to be an excellent early warning system to detect babies in trouble.

Do not feel silly reporting decreased fetal movement. All of us would prefer to be reassured that your baby is just fine, just as you would. If you have any questions about fetal movements and counting them, please ask your provider.