

## What is it?

Fetal movements is a term that refers to the baby's movements in the womb during pregnancy. Your baby's movements are one of the signs they are well.

Most pregnant women start to feel fetal movements from between 16 to 24 weeks. A baby's movements can be described as a flutter, kick, swish or roll. Regular movements are a good sign your baby is healthy and well.

If your baby is unwell, their movements may slow or stop. A decrease in fetal movements can occur with other symptoms, like bleeding and pain. This may also occur if you have high blood pressure or if the baby is small for its gestation.

Your baby's movements should not slow down or become weaker towards the end of your pregnancy. If you are worried about a change in your baby's movements, or if you haven't felt your baby move as much as usual, contact your GP or local birthing unit as soon as you can. They will check your baby's health.

Being aware of your baby's movements during pregnancy will help keep your baby safe and healthy.

## What will my healthcare team do?

Your healthcare team will assess your baby's wellbeing and provide appropriate care. They will talk to you about fetal movements and what to look out for in future.

### What questions could I ask my doctor?

- ☐ *What is a normal amount of movement?*
- ☐ *How will I know if there is a problem?*
- ☐ *Who can I call if I have a question?*



## What can I do?

There is no set number of normal movements, so you should get to know the pattern of your baby's movements.

You can do this by counting the number of movements your baby makes in an hour. This will be your baseline as the usual amount of movement your baby does.

You should continue to feel your baby move until and during labour. If you notice a decrease in the strength or frequency of your baby's movements at any time, you should contact your local birthing unit immediately.

Eating or drinking can help encourage your baby to move. Be sure to eat a healthy diet, get enough sleep and reduce stress.

## What supports are available?

If you notice there is less than normal fetal movements, contact your local birthing unit or your GP for an urgent assessment.

## Where can I learn more?

- **Pregnancy, Birth and Baby** – Baby movements during pregnancy: [pregnancybirthbaby.org.au](https://pregnancybirthbaby.org.au)
- **Safer Baby** – Your baby's movements matter: [saferbaby.org.au](https://saferbaby.org.au)