Week-by-Week Pregnancy Checklist

From the stressful (prenatal tests! gaining weight!) to the sheer fun (buying maternity clothes! your baby shower!), growing a baby involves a seemingly endless host of developments to expect, plan and accomplish. Our step-by-step timeline and checklist will help you navigate your pregnancy with as little stress and guesswork as possible. So grab your pencil, put your feet up and simply gestate!



Week 1.

- [ ] You're actually not pregnant yet—the clock starts ticking from the first day of your last period. So even though pregnancies are said to be 40 weeks long, you only carry your baby for 38 weeks.

Week 2.

- [ ] Ovulation occurs. For the best chances of getting pregnant, have sex one to two days before your expected ovulation date.

Week 3.

- [ ] You may be pregnant but probably won't have any symptoms.

Week 4.

- [ ] Positive test: You're pregnant! You may be starting to feel bloated, crampy, tired and moody, and experiencing sore breasts, nausea/vomiting and a frequent need to pee. But don't worry if you're not—that's normal.

Week 5

- [ ] Though the embryo is only about the size of a grain of sand, the heart is pumping blood, most other organs have begun to

- [ ] develop, and arm and leg buds appear. You may be starting to experience "pregnancy brain."

Week 6.

- [ ] Now that the pregnancy is feeling more real, you might be worrying about miscarriage.

Week 7.

- [ ] The embryo doubles in size but is still less than a half-inch long. As your pregnancy hormones increase, morning sickness may be worsening. Or, you may be ravenous 24/7.

Week 8.

- [ ] Your doctor may look or listen for the baby's heartbeat with an ultrasound. Once you see or hear it, your miscarriage risk drops to about 2 percent. He'll also give you an official due date—though very few women actually deliver on that day.

Week 9

- [ ] The pressure of your growing uterus on your bladder may cause you to leak small amounts of urine.

Week 10.

- [ ] Your inch-long baby is now called a fetus. While the icky side effects of pregnancy may be starting to abate, your anxiety about having a healthy baby might be increasing.

Week 11

- [ ] Your cravings may run the gamut from cheeseburgers to chalk (really!). Weird nonfood cravings are known as pica and can reflect a deficiency in your diet. This week, nearly all of the fetus's organs are beginning to function, and genitals begin to take on male or female form.

Week 12.

- [ ] Your uterus has begun to expand outside the protective pelvic bones. It will increase in size by almost 1,000 times by the end of your pregnancy! You may really be starting to show now, especially if it's not your first baby.

Week 13.

- [ ] Now that you've finished your first trimester, you can start eating for two—a little. Plan on gaining about 12 pounds during the next 14 or so weeks.

Week 14.

- [ ] Your renewed energy (and end to morning sickness) may lull you into thinking you can take on a marathon, but follow this guideline: Work out only so hard that you can carry on a conversation without getting out of breath.

Week 15.

- [ ] The "window of opportunity" for many important screening and diagnostic tests opens this week, should you decide to undergo them.

Week 16.

- [ ] Sometime between 16 and 22 weeks, you'll start to feel your baby move.

Week 17.

- [ ] Your sleep may be marked by vivid and bizarre dreams, often reflecting anxiety you might have about childbirth and parenthood.

Week 18.

- [ ] Just when you thought you couldn't possibly take any more pee breaks, you do. It's inevitable: As your baby grows, your bladder shrinks (or so it seems).

Week 19.

- [ ] Now that you're feeling better, it's time to spend some quality time with your partner. So have sex! Unless you're having complications, it's safe for most women throughout pregnancy.

Week 20.

- [ ] You're halfway there, which means your uterus has reached your navel! The nesting urge is probably kicking in. Have fun with it, but don't go overboard and exhaust yourself.

Week 21.

- [ ] If you're 35 or older, have chronic high blood pressure or diabetes or are carrying multiples, you are at a higher risk of preeclampsia. It can occur this early, but usually doesn't set in until the third trimester.

Week 22.

- [ ] You may be developing hemorrhoids and constipation. Lucky you! At this point, the fetus weighs almost a pound.

Week 23.

- [ ] Your doctor may soon advise you to steer clear of long-distance travel—not because it is unsafe, but because she wants you close by in case you go into labor.

Week 24.

- [ ] If you are 30 or older, have a family history of diabetes, are Hispanic or obese, you are at increased risk for gestational diabetes. It typically has no symptoms.

Week 25.

- [ ] You may be afflicted with heartburn and leg cramps, especially at night.

Week 26.

- [ ] Your to-do list is getting longer while you're getting more tired. Your fetus begins to sleep for longer periods now, often when you do. Its eyes open and are beginning to blink.

Week 27.

- [ ] You may be distressed to see the numbers on the scale creep (OK, jump) up: From here on out, you'll probably be gaining about 1 pound a week. This still only translates to about 300 extra calories a day, though.

Week 28.

- [ ] Welcome to the third trimester! Braxton Hicks ("practice") contractions usually start about now. They feel like an intermittent tightening in your abdomen.

Week 29

- [ ] The basketball-sized lump in your belly may be inhibiting shoe tying, leg shaving and the like. The fetus is increasingly sensitive to light and sound.

Week 30.

- [ ] You might find yourself increasingly breathless as your growing uterus crowds your diaphragm. It should ease a bit when the baby drops lower in your pelvis later in pregnancy.

Week 31.

- [ ] You may be noticing a gradual decrease in the power of your baby's kicks and punches as space in utero becomes tighter. This is normal.

Week 32.

- [ ] Pregnancy may be starting to lose some of its glow. Having your baby shower right about now might give you just the boost you need.

Week 33.

- [ ] Don't get too married to your dream delivery: Even if you're hoping for a vaginal birth, there's a nearly 1 in 3 chance you'll have a C-section.

Week 34.

- [ ] You may be driving yourself—not to mention your mate—crazy making sure your house is spit-shined and the nursery is fit for a king (or queen). Keep it in perspective: All you really need is a car seat, a place for the baby to sleep, diapers and some basic clothes.

Week 35.

- [ ] There's a good chance your body harbors Group B streptococcus bacteria without your knowing it. If it colonizes in the vagina and is left untreated, it can infect your baby at birth.

Week 36.

- [ ] The baby may drop lower into your pelvis in preparation for delivery. This should make it easier to breathe—yet your pee breaks will become ever more frequent.

Week 37.

- [ ] Your breasts may be leaking colostrum—your baby's first food. Plus, you may feel so huge and uncomfortable that you're tempted to ask your doctor to induce you early.

Week 38.

- [ ] Your pregnancy is considered full-term now, and the lanugo—the downy hair that covered your baby's body—is starting to disappear.

Week 39.

- [ ] If you're still working, don't beat yourself up if you decide to go on leave a little earlier than you planned.

Week 40.

- [ ] If you haven't delivered yet, your OB will monitor you more closely. Some docs will allow women to go two weeks past their due date; most will induce by then.

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