

# Your Baby's Movements in Pregnancy

Information for Mothers

**You must not wait until the next day to seek help  
if you are worried about your baby's movements**



① For more information,  
please contact your Midwife

Caring with pride

## What are normal movements?

Most women usually begin to feel their baby move between 18 and 20 weeks of pregnancy but some will not become aware of movements until after this. Baby's movements in pregnancy can be described as anything from a kick, flutter, swish or roll. The type of movement may change as your pregnancy progresses.

## How often should my baby move?

There is no specific number of normal movements. Your baby should develop an individual pattern of movements that you will become aware of. They will have sleep periods during which they will not move, but these rarely last longer than 90 minutes. The number of movements tends to increase until 32 weeks of pregnancy and then stay about the same. It is important to remember that you should continue to feel your baby move right up to the time you go into labour and throughout labour too.

## Why are my baby's movements important?

Feeling your baby move provides reassurance that they are well.

- A reduction in your baby's movements or a change in the pattern can sometimes be an important warning sign that a baby is unwell.
- Reduced movements can be associated with stillbirth. This is a risk for any pregnancy.
- In most cases the baby will be born healthy, but it is important to get checked.

## What to look out for:

If you feel that the normal pattern of your baby's movements has changed and/or reduced then please seek help as soon as possible by contacting the hospital at which you are booked to have your baby.

**One in every 200 births in England ends in stillbirth**

**Your baby's movements are an important way of checking they are well**

If you are **less than 26 weeks pregnant** you should contact your Community Midwife who will arrange to see you as soon as possible. If you have any difficulties with contacting your Community Midwife please contact:

York Triage between 07.00-22.00 on 01904 725924 or outside these hours York Labour Ward on 01904 726004

Scarborough Antenatal Day Unit between 09.00-17.00 Mon-Fri on 01723 385295 or outside these hours Scarborough Labour Ward 01723 342124

If you are **more than 26 weeks pregnant** you should contact the Labour Ward who will arrange to see you as soon as possible:

York Triage between 07.00-22.00 on 01904 725924 or outside these hours York Labour Ward on 01904 726004

Scarborough Antenatal Day Unit between 09.00-17.00 Mon-Fri on 01723 385295 or outside these hours Scarborough Labour Ward 01723 342124

## What will happen when I am seen?

The care you will be given will depend on your stage of pregnancy:

If you are less than 26 weeks pregnant the midwife will listen to your baby's heartbeat and perform a full antenatal check-up. If there are any additional concerns it may be necessary to refer you to the hospital the same day for further assessment.

If you are over 26 weeks pregnant the midwives will listen to your baby's heartbeat and perform a full antenatal check-up. They will put you on a machine that monitors your baby's heartbeat. This can last up to an hour and provides information about your baby's wellbeing. Many babies will start to move normally after this and you will usually be able to go home. In some cases it may be necessary for you to be seen by a doctor and an ultrasound scan may be arranged. Very rarely it may be safer for your baby to be born as soon as possible.

## What if my baby's movements are reduced again?

If after discharge you are still not happy with your baby's movement, you must contact the hospital again, even if everything was normal when you were initially seen.

**Never hesitate to contact the Maternity Unit for advice; no matter how many times this happens.**

## Contact details

### **Community Midwives:**

See front page of your handheld notes

### **York Hospital**

York Triage

Tel: 01904 725924 (07.00-22.00 hours)

or

York Labour Ward

Tel: 01904 726004 (outside these hours)

### **Scarborough Hospital**

Scarborough Antenatal Day Unit

Tel: 01723 385295 (Between 09.00-17.00, Mon-Fri)

or

Scarborough Labour Ward

Tel: 01723 342124 (outside these hours)

## Sources and acknowledgements

This information is based on the RCOG guideline 'Reduced Fetal Movements' (February 2011) and the Patient Information Leaflet 'Your baby's movements in pregnancy: information for you' (August 2012).

Adapted from Cheshire & Merseyside SCN publication, with acknowledgement and thanks.

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:  
Maternity Services Patient Information Group, c/o  
Patient Leaflet Team, The York Hospital, 98 Union  
Terrace, York, YO31 7ES, telephone 01904 721045 or  
725230 or email us at [patient.information2@york.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information2@york.nhs.uk).

## **Teaching, Training and Research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [pals@york.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@york.nhs.uk).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

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email: [access@york.nhs.uk](mailto:access@york.nhs.uk)



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Owner	Maternity Services
Date first issued	July 2015
Review Date	October 2019
Version	1 (reissued November 2017)
Approved by	Obstetrics and Gynaecology CGG
Document Reference	PIL 948 v1.2



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