

Fetal Movement Count

One way to check your baby's health before birth is to count the number of times he or she moves in a certain period each day. This number is the fetal movement count. Babies do not move constantly. They may sleep and then wake up and move.

How to Record Fetal Movements

- Choose the time of day when your baby is most active.
- Rest on your left or right side. Get in a comfortable position.
- You may want to eat or drink something before counting fetal movements. Food can make your baby more active.
- Your baby may be more active if you move around shortly before doing counts.
- **Do not smoke.** Smoking is harmful to you and your baby. Smoking may make your baby less active for up to 90 minutes.
- Count all of your baby's movements—kicks, rolls, and big and little movements. Sometimes you can see a ripple or little bump on your abdomen when the baby changes position. Some women describe the movements as rolling, stretching or pushing. Each feeling of movement counts as one movement.
- If you cannot feel your baby moving on the inside, place your hands lightly on your belly and watch for movement.
- Look at a clock and write down the time you start counting.
- Each time the baby moves make a mark on the paper.
- **When you have counted 10 movements in an hour, stop counting.**
- If the baby moved fewer than 8-10 times in an hour, count the movements for another hour.
- **Call your doctor or nurse** if there are still less than 8-10 movements in that hour.

Call your doctor or nurse **right away** if you notice a big change in movement. Tell him or her when you last felt your baby move and if the movement changed slowly or suddenly. Your nurse or doctor may use other ways to check the baby such as listening to the baby's heart rate or monitoring the heart rate pattern over time. **Talk to your nurse or doctor if you have any questions or concerns.**