

Guide to Fetal Development

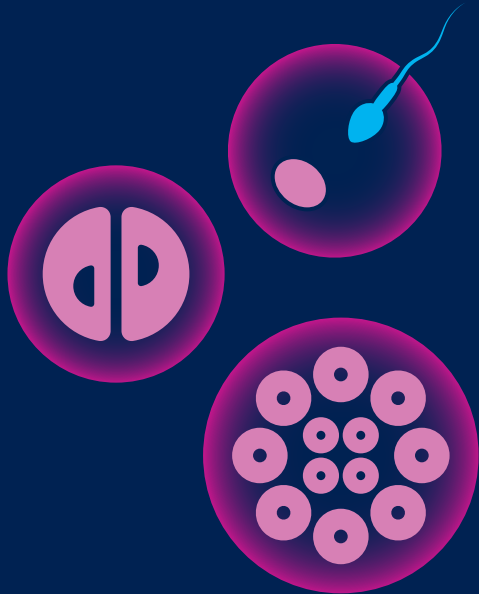
HOW YOUR Baby Grows

duly
HEALTH AND CARE



How does pregnancy begin?

Fertilization, the union of an egg and a sperm, is the first step in a complex series of events that leads to pregnancy. Fertilization takes place in the fallopian tube. During the next few days, the fused egg and sperm move through the fallopian tube to the lining of the uterus. There, it implants and starts to grow.

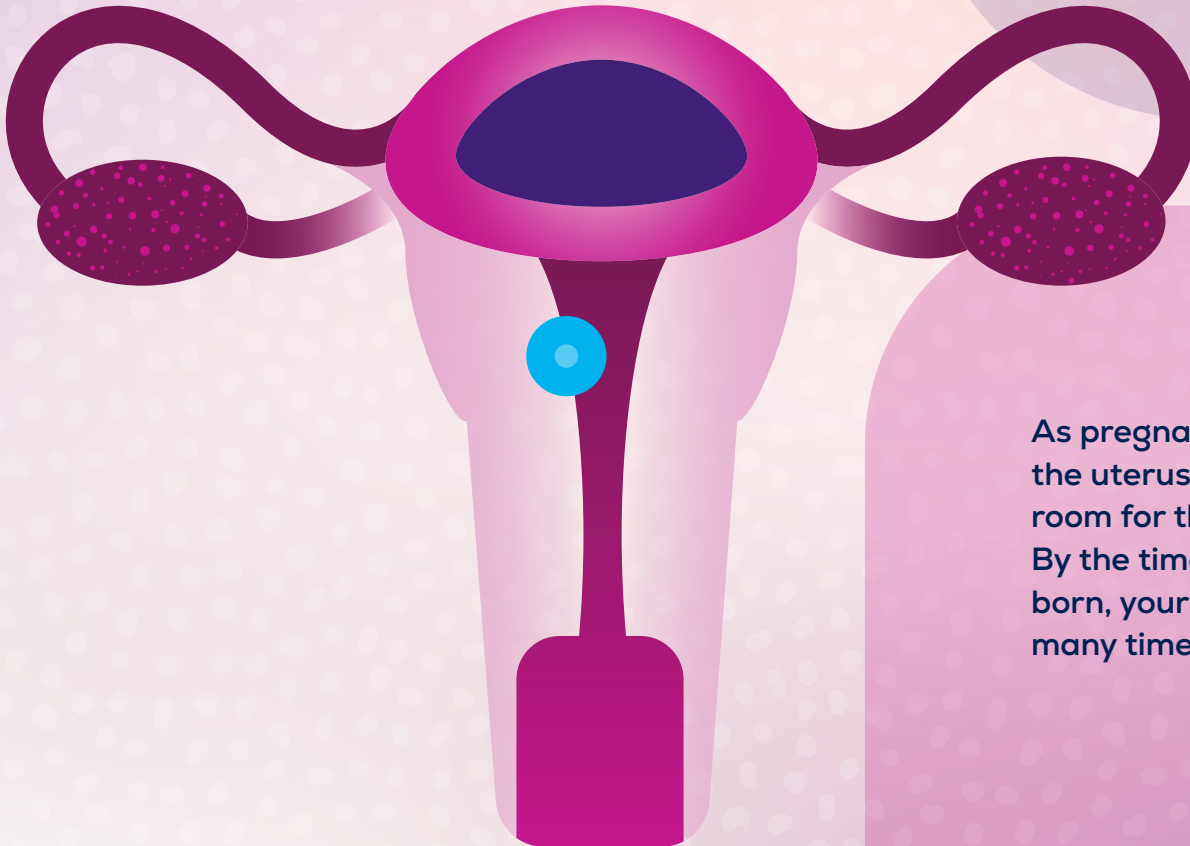


How long does a normal pregnancy last?

A normal pregnancy lasts about 280 days (or 40 weeks), counting from the first day of your last menstrual period. A normal range, however, is from as few as 259 days to as many as 294 days (37–42 weeks). The 40 weeks of pregnancy are divided into three trimesters. Each trimester lasts about 12–13 weeks (or about 3 months).

How does the uterus change during pregnancy?

During pregnancy, the lining of a woman's uterus thickens and its blood vessels enlarge to nourish the fetus.



As pregnancy progresses, the uterus expands to make room for the growing baby. By the time your baby is born, your uterus will be many times its normal size.



6 weeks

By 6 weeks, the fertilized egg attaches to the lining of the uterus. Some of these cells will grow into a baby. Other cells will form the placenta.



Arms & legs begin to form



Brain & spinal cord begin to form



Heart & lungs begin to develop



Heart begins to beat near the end of the first month



10 weeks

By the end of 10 weeks, all major organs and body systems have begun to develop in your baby.



Eyelids form, but remain closed



Inner ear begins to develop



Bones appear



Ankles, wrists, fingers & toes form



Genitals begin to develop



14 weeks

By week 14, all internal parts are formed, but are not fully developed. Your baby's skin is almost transparent.



Twenty buds for future teeth appear



Soft nails begin to form



Bones & muscles begin to grow



Intestines begin to form



Backbone is soft & can flex



Hands developed more than feet



Arms are longer than the legs



18 weeks

By week 18, the skin is wrinkled and the body is covered with a waxy coating (vernix) and fine hair (lanugo). Your placenta is fully formed.



Eyebrows, eyelashes & fingernails form



Arms & legs can flex



Outer ear begins to develop



External sex organs are formed



Fetus can swallow & hear



Neck is formed



Kidneys are functioning & begin to produce more urine



22 weeks

By week 22, the eggs have formed in the ovaries in girls. In boys, the testicles begin to descend from the abdomen into the scrotum.



You may be able to feel movement



Sucking reflex develops & baby may suck its thumb



Nails grow to the tips of the fingers



Gallbladder begins producing bile, for digesting nutrients



26 weeks

By the end of week 26, your baby's lungs are fully formed, but not yet functioning.



Real hair begins to grow



Brain is rapidly developing



Eyes begin to open



Finger & toe prints can be seen



30 weeks

By week 30, the fine hair (lanugo) covering the fetus' body will begin to disappear.



Eyes can open & close & sense changes in light



Fetus kicks & stretches



Fetus can make grasping motions



Responds to sound



34 weeks

By week 34, with its major developments finished, the fetus gains weight very quickly.



Bones harden, but skull remains soft & flexible for delivery



Different regions of the brain are forming



Taste buds develop & the fetus can taste sweet & sour



Fetus may now hiccup



36-40 weeks

In the final weeks of pregnancy, your baby usually turns into a head-down position for birth.



Lungs mature & are ready to function on their own



Skin is less wrinkled



Sleeping patterns develop



Fetus will gain about ½ pound per week





Information from The American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists.

Updated 06/2022