

Typical Pregnancy Progression

conception day



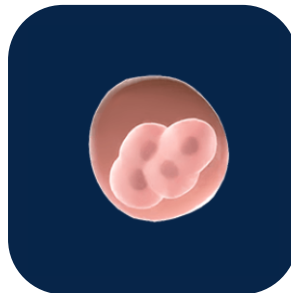
The egg and sperm most often unite in the fallopian tube (the tube connecting the ovary to the uterus) to form a single cell called a zygote. This tiny new cell, smaller than a grain of salt, contains all the genetic information for every detail of the newly created life—the color of the hair and eyes, the intricate fine lines of the fingerprint, the physical appearance, the sex, the eventual height, and the skin tone.

Days 2-5



This new life is now called a zygote after the fusion of egg and sperm. Division of cells occurs approximately every 24-36 hours until the ball of cells, known as the blastocyst, reaches the uterine lining and implants. The lining of the uterus inside the mother's body prepares to receive this new life.

3 Weeks



The embryo begins to implant in the uterine lining about day 6 of development, or three weeks after the last menstrual cycle. Hormones trigger the mother's body to nurture the pregnancy and prevent her from having monthly periods. A blood test can confirm pregnancy. Around day 8, the embryo is approximately the size of a period and already complex.

4 Weeks



A pregnancy test taken at this point will measure hCG, the pregnancy hormone in a woman's urine, to tell her if she is pregnant. The embryo is wholly attached to the lining of the uterus.

5 Weeks



The heart, the size of a poppy seed, is the first organ to function. The brain is already rapidly developing. The foundation for every organ system is already established and beginning to develop.

6 Weeks



Just 4 weeks after sex, the baby is growing rapidly and measures $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch long. The basic structure of the entire central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) has been formed. The eyes are developing, and the arm and leg buds are now visible. During the 6th week, the heart is already pumping blood to the rest of the developing body and can be detected by a hand-held ultrasound device called a Doppler. The beating heart is already beating 100 – 120 times a minute.

8 Weeks



At 8 weeks, the embryo can respond to touch by reflexively moving away from the stimulus. The baby is now about $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch long. The elbows and fingers are visible. Some reports show that the embryo can move its trunk and limbs. Depending on the gender, the testicles or ovaries have begun to form. Lungs begin to develop, taste buds form on the tongue, tooth buds for “baby teeth” take shape in the jaw, and eyelids begin to form.

9 Weeks



The baby measures $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch long and weighs almost $\frac{1}{8}$ of an ounce. The developing ears and nose are visible, and there is pigment in the retina. The arms and legs are growing rapidly, and the bones in the arms are beginning to calcify and harden.

10 Weeks



The embryo's brain is growing rapidly. Each minute, it produces almost 250,000 new neurons. Brain activity can be recorded. The upper and lower portions of the arms, legs, fingers, and toes are seen. By now, the external ear is fully developed.

11 Weeks



The baby has all the major organ systems, and he or she is no longer called an embryo but is now known as a fetus, a Latin word meaning “young one.” The fetus is about 2 inches long and can yawn and suck. The eyelids are fully formed and closed to protect the developing eyes. Studies confirm that the developing baby has all the structures necessary to experience pain as early as 12 weeks.

14 Weeks



Now 3½ inches long, the fetus is coordinated enough to find his or her thumb and suck it. Fingernails and toenails are beginning to grow. Although the fetus has been kicking for about a month, the mother can't feel the movement yet. The fetus may even have hiccups. By 14-15 weeks, fetal anesthesia is recommended for fetal surgery.

16 Weeks



The heart beats between 110 and 180 times per minute and pumps about 26 gallons of blood daily. The sex of the fetus might be seen on an ultrasound. If she is a girl, millions of eggs are now forming in her ovaries. At almost 5 inches in length and weighing nearly 4 ounces, the fetus can coordinate the movement of his or her arms and legs.

18 Weeks



In just 2 weeks, the fetus's weight has almost doubled to 7 ounces. The skeleton is hardening and calcifying, a process that is visible on ultrasound. Reflexes such as blinking and frowning are now developed. The fetus has his or her unique fingerprints and toeprints. Between weeks 15 and 20, the mother can usually feel the baby move.

20 Weeks



The fetus is about 10 inches long from head to heel and weighs 11 ounces. The fetus is very active, and the movement may be felt as a flutter. The fetus has unique waking and sleeping patterns and even has a favorite sleeping position. The pregnancy is about half over, and the mother has started showing or appears visibly pregnant.

22 Weeks



The fetus is approximately 11 inches long and weighs around 1 pound. Hair is visible on the head and body. The fetus most likely feels pain more intensely than older children and adults. (Inhibitory neural pathways do not develop adequately until post-natal development. These pathways decrease the severity of the pain sensation.) Nearly a third of babies born at this gestational age, who are cared for in high-level nurseries, may survive.

24 Weeks



The fetus now weighs approximately 1½ pounds and makes breathing movements, inhaling amniotic fluid, which helps develop the lungs and prepares the baby for breathing after birth. The ear has developed to the point where the fetus can recognize its mother's voice, breathing, and heartbeat. About a week ago, rapid eye movements began, an activity associated with dreaming. The fetus may have a blink-startle response from sound applied to the mother's abdomen.

26 Weeks



The fetus now weighs almost 2 pounds. Eyes can now respond to light, and the permanent teeth buds are apparent in the gums. Eyelashes and eyebrows are wellformed, and the hair is growing longer.

28 Weeks



The fetus is now approximately 15 inches long and weighs about 2½ pounds. The brain is developed enough to coordinate rhythmic breathing and regulate body temperature. As the fetus gains weight, the skin becomes less wrinkled and smoother.

34 Weeks



The fetus is now about 17 inches long, weighs 4/12 pounds, and continues to grow and mature. By this stage of development, the baby can open its eyes wide. The head is covered in hair, the fingernails have reached the tips of the fingers, and the toenails are close behind. The lungs are still developing.

40 Weeks



The fetus is now approximately 20 inches long and may weigh between 7 and 8 pounds. He or she has a plump body and a firm grasp. Typically, the fetus is head-down in the mother's pelvis and awaiting birth. The baby is considered term beginning at 37 weeks, with a little more than half naturally delivering by their due date. It is normal to deliver between 37 and 42 weeks of pregnancy.