

20 – 24 Weeks

answers to your pregnancy questions



20
WEEKS

at 20 weeks of pregnancy:

Your baby may weigh up to one pound and is about ten inches long. The baby's digestive system now starts producing a dark, sticky substance called meconium. Some babies will start to pass this during delivery and you will see this in the first soiled diapers after the baby is born. The fingernails continue to grow to the ends of the fingertips.

21
WEEKS

at 21–22 weeks of pregnancy:

Your baby has formed fingerprints now. If you notice jerking movements—it's likely the baby hiccupping! Loud sounds may startle the baby. Tear ducts are developing and the baby's eyes are moving behind the still-closed eyelids.

22
WEEKS

23
WEEKS

at 23–24 weeks of pregnancy:

Your baby's bones are starting to store calcium and grow harder, and more muscle tone is starting to develop. You may start to be able to distinguish the feel of a tiny arm or leg that may even push back if pushed gently. By the 24th week the baby may weigh up to a pound and a half and is about 12 inches long. The lungs are now fully formed but not yet ready to be able to breath outside the womb.

24
WEEKS

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Rh factor

At one of your first obstetrical visits your blood was drawn for several tests. One of these tests was to determine your blood type (O, A, B or AB) and if you have a positive (Rh positive) or negative (Rh negative) blood type.

If you have a negative blood type and the baby's father has a positive blood type, the baby may inherit the positive Rh factor. If your baby has an Rh positive blood type, it is possible for your immune system to develop antibodies because the baby's cells are different from yours. These cells may not be a problem during your current pregnancy but could cause serious problems during future pregnancies.

To prevent this, women with Rh negative blood are given an injection of RhoGAM® (a type of gamma globulin) at the time they have testing for gestational diabetes (usually 28 weeks of pregnancy). This injection is often given if a pregnant woman experiences bleeding, has certain types of procedures done during pregnancy and after delivery if the newborn has a positive blood type.

Testing for gestational diabetes

During your pregnancy, you will be tested for a condition called gestational diabetes. This test usually takes place between 24 and 28 weeks of pregnancy and is often referred to as “one hour glucose” or “glucose tolerance test.” You will be given a sugary drink and your blood will be drawn one hour later to test your blood sugar.

Gestational diabetes is a condition that allows glucose to build up in your blood rather than being absorbed by your cells as it normally would be. This condition is caused by a hormone made by the placenta during pregnancy and will resolve for most women after the baby is born. If your blood sugar level is higher than expected with this screening, further testing will be done later to determine if you have gestational diabetes.

You should not fast on the day of your testing. It is recommended that you eat a well-balanced diet as you normally would, but you should avoid eating concentrated sweets like candy or regular soda immediately before your test.

Determining if you have gestational diabetes is important for the health of the baby. Managing blood sugar with appropriate diet, exercise and sometimes medication during your pregnancy can help ensure that your baby grows appropriately and does not produce too much insulin after delivery. A screening test for antibodies will be drawn and done for all pregnant women at the time of the glucose tolerance test.

POSSIBLE PREGNANCY SIDE EFFECTS

Forgetfulness:

You might find it harder to concentrate during pregnancy. You may experience moments of forgetfulness that you've never had before. Lists and other memory prompts are sometimes helpful.

Dizziness:

You might experience dizziness as a result of the circulation changes in your body during pregnancy. This is often because of less blood flow to your head and upper body. It may help to drink plenty of water and remember to stand up or change positions slowly. Standing for long periods or getting too hot may make dizziness worse.



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