

Fetal Kick Counts

What are “Kick Counts”?

Counting your baby’s movements, or “Kick Counts”, is a way of monitoring your baby’s activity. Doing kick counts is one way to monitor how the placenta is supporting the baby and if the baby’s activity is normal. They are simple to do.

When do I count?

You should plan to do kick counts at a time you know the baby is usually active. This may be after a meal or perhaps in the evening around bedtime. By choosing a time when the baby is usually active, doing kick counts will not take long at all. You know better than anyone else when your baby is active and quiet, and you can decide the best and most convenient time to count the baby’s movements. **Count eight movements** and record the beginning and ending times of the counting periods. *It is considered reassuring if you can get eight movements within 2 hours of time.*

How do I count kicks?

It is best to choose a time when your baby is usually active (e.g., after eating, in the evening, etc.) and to be in a situation where you are able to monitor the movements adequately. Sometimes if you are very busy or distracted, you may not notice all of the more subtle movements. If you are having trouble reaching eight movements, try drinking or eating something sweet and lying on your side, where you can feel your abdomen if necessary. Count each time the baby moves on his/her own, such as kicks, rolls, punches, turns and stretches. **DO NOT** count hiccups or movements the baby makes if you push against him/her.

How do I know the counts are okay?

You should have at least eight movements in two hours for babies that are 32 weeks along or more. It is important to contact **our office at (608) 729-6300** at once if you have fewer, so that your baby’s status can be checked. Although low fetal activity can indicate a concerning situation, many times this turns out not to be the case, but we would refer to evaluate if needed.

Labor Instruction Sheet

As you approach your due date, here are some helpful reminders to guide you as things occur. Please review this sheet carefully. If you feel your situation warrants you going to the hospital, **please call our clinic number (608-729-6300) instead of Meriter Triage (they will tell you to call them first – please don't)**. Please call us for any of the following:

Contractions

If this is your first baby, wait until your contractions are consistently every five (5) minutes or less for at least an hour, and strong enough that you must breathe through them, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor. If this is not your first baby, discuss when to call with your doctor. Intensity of the contractions is more important than the frequency.

If the contractions are strong and it is difficult to talk through them, it is important to call. If contractions are mild and it is easy to talk through them, then you may wait until the contractions become more intense prior to calling. Membranes may not rupture prior to the onset of labor and you should not wait for membranes to rupture if you are having strong, regular contractions.

Rupture of Membranes

Call if you have a gush or steady trickle of fluid whether the contractions are occurring or not and no matter what time of day. At that time, we will ask questions about the color of the fluid and the baby's activity and determine how soon you should be evaluated in the hospital or office.

Bleeding

Some bloody show is normal and may appear up to one to two days prior to the onset of labor. It is also possible to have bloody show following a vaginal exam in the office. It is not necessary to call for bloody show unless the bleeding is heavy enough to require a pad.

Fetal Movement

If you notice that the baby is less active, lie down on your left side. If you do not feel at least eight (8) movements before the end of two (2) hours, you should call our office at (608) 729-6300.

Mucus Plug

Many women will experience an increase in mucus prior to the onset of labor. This is not a reliable predictor of the onset of labor and it is not necessary to call for the passage of the "mucus plug".

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- You are responsible for checking with your insurance provider regarding pre-certification, especially if you are having a scheduled C-section.
- **Meriter is a teaching hospital and we strongly believe in supporting our doctors-in-training. A resident physician (who could be male or female) will be assisting your attending physician during your hospital stay. A medical student may also be present.**

As always, call (608) 729-6300 first. In the unlikely event that you are unable to get an answer by calling the clinic number (either in person or through our answering service), you may call Meriter Triage at (608) 417-6228.