How can I help to reduce healthcare associated infections?
Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming into and after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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Your baby’s movements in pregnancy

Patient information leaflet
If you want to read this leaflet in another language please contact your Community Midwife

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Division of Women, Children & Sexual Health Services
Normal fetal movements
Most women start to feel their baby move when they are 18-20 weeks pregnant. However if this is your first pregnancy you may not feel your baby move until you are more than 20 weeks pregnant. If you have been pregnant before you may feel your baby move as early as 16 weeks. Pregnant women can feel the baby’s movements as a kick, flutter, swish or roll.

As your baby develops, both the number and type of movements will change with your baby’s activity pattern. From 28 weeks onwards, there may be a change in the type and feel of the fetal movements. However the number of movements should remain the same. Often, if you are busy, you may not notice all of these movements. Importantly, you should continue to feel your baby move in their usual way up to the time you go into labour. Your baby should move during labour too.

How many movements are enough?
There is no specific number of movements which is normal. During your pregnancy, you will become aware of your baby’s own pattern of movements, getting in tune with the baby’s movements is also a great way to start the bonding process. Less movements or a change in your baby’s movements is what is important.

Why are my unborn baby’s movements important?
During your pregnancy, feeling your baby move gives you reassurance of his or her wellbeing. How baby’s movements are felt can change between women and between different pregnancies in the same woman.

What should I do if I feel my baby’s movements are reduced or changed?
If you notice your baby is moving less than usual or if you have noticed a change in the pattern of movements—you need to contact your Midwife, the Day Assessment Unit (DAU) or the labour ward (if out of hours). See page 6 for useful contact numbers.
We continually strive to improve the quality of information given to patients. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this information booklet, please contact:

Head of Midwifery  
Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust  
Stoke Mandeville Hospital  
Mandeville Road  
Aylesbury  
Buckinghamshire  
HP21 8AL

Who you should contact and the care you will be given will depend on the stage of your pregnancy:

- **Less than 20 weeks pregnant:** Most women start to feel their baby move when they are 18–20 weeks pregnant. If by 24 weeks you have *never* felt your baby move, you should contact your Midwife (or Labour Ward if out of hours), who will check your baby’s heartbeat. An ultrasound scan may be arranged to check your baby’s wellbeing.

- **Between 20 weeks and 23+6 weeks pregnant:** You should contact your Midwife (or Labour Ward if out of hours), who will listen to your baby’s heartbeat, measure your blood pressure and test your urine for protein.

- **Between 24 weeks and 28 weeks pregnant:** You should contact your Midwife (or Labour Ward if out of hours), who will listen to your baby’s heartbeat. You will have a full antenatal check up that includes checking the size of your abdomen, measuring your blood pressure and testing your urine for protein. If your abdomen measures smaller than expected, an ultrasound scan may be arranged to check on your baby’s growth and development.

- **Over 28 weeks pregnant:** You must contact the DAU or labour ward (if out of hours).

It is important that you:

- *Always seek professional help immediately.*
- *Never go to sleep ignoring a reduction in your baby’s movements.*
- *Do not rely on any home kits you may have for listening to your baby’s heartbeat.*
What to expect in the Day Assessment Unit or Labour Ward:

- Please bring your hand held notes with you
- Allow 1-3 hours for your appointment
- You will be checked by a Midwife
- A detailed history of your pregnancy and any medical conditions will be taken
- A full antenatal check up will be offered. This will include:
  - the Midwife measuring your abdomen (symphysio fundal height) to assess the growth; and feeling your tummy to assess your baby’s position
  - listening to your baby’s heart rate and performing a detailed electronic recording of your baby’s heart rate and movements. This is called a cardiotocograph (CTG). This should give you reassurance about your baby’s wellbeing
  - your temperature, pulse and blood pressure will be recorded and your urine tested (you do not need to bring a sample with you)

These investigations usually provide reassurance that all is well. Most women who experience less movements with their baby only once have a straightforward pregnancy and go on to give birth to a healthy baby.

If the check up of you and your baby are found to be normal you will be transferred back to the care of your community Midwife or Obstetrician.

Should any further follow up be required this will be discussed with you at the time on an individual basis.

What should I do if I find my baby’s movements are reduced again?

When you go home you will be advised to note your baby’s movements and, should your baby have fewer movements again, you must immediately contact the DAU or Labour Ward (if out of hours) again. Please contact us for advice, no matter how many times this happens.

References


Useful Contact Numbers

Antenatal Clinic
Stoke Mandeville Hospital 01296 316140
Wycombe Hospital 01494 425569

Day Assessment Unit (DAU)
Stoke Mandeville Hospital 01296 316106
Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm
Weekends & Bank Holidays 9.00am to 5.00pm

Labour Ward
Stoke Mandeville Hospital 01296 316103/4

Please Note:
This leaflet explains some of the most common concerns that some women may experience. However, it is not comprehensive. If you are concerned and want to ask anything else related to your care please speak to your Community Midwife.