

Reporting reduced fetal movements

What should I expect?

This leaflet outlines the care that you should expect to receive, depending on which stage of the pregnancy you are at.



<24 weeks Less than 24 weeks pregnant

Most women first become aware of their baby moving when they are 16–24 weeks pregnant. If by 24 weeks you have never felt your baby move, you should contact your midwife, who will check your baby's heartbeat. An ultrasound scan may be arranged and you may be seen by a specialist to check your baby's wellbeing if a problem is suspected.



24-28 weeks 24-28 weeks pregnant

You should contact your midwife and they should see you the same day if possible. If they can't see you, they may refer you to the hospital maternity unit. Your baby's heartbeat will be checked and you will have a full check-up that should include:

1. Checking the size of your baby by measuring your bump
2. Checking your blood pressure
3. Testing your urine for protein

If your baby is smaller than expected, an ultrasound scan may be arranged to check on your baby's growth.



28+ weeks Over 28 weeks pregnant

You must contact your midwife or local maternity unit. You must not wait until the next day to seek help and you should be seen on the same day. If it is out of hours you may be asked to go to the labour ward and wait to be seen.

1. You will be asked about your baby's movements
2. You will have an antenatal check-up, including checking your baby's heartbeat and measuring the size of your bump
3. Your baby's heart rate will be monitored using a machine called a CTG, usually for at least 20 minutes

You should not be discharged until you are happy with your baby's movements again.

You may also have an ultrasound scan if:

- your baby is smaller than expected
- your pregnancy has other factors that are associated with a higher risk of stillbirth

The ultrasound scan is normally done within 24 hours.

These checks usually show that all is well. Most women who have one episode of reduction in their baby's movements go on to have a healthy baby.



What if my baby's movements become reduced again?

If, after your check up, you are still not happy with your baby's movement, you must contact either your midwife or maternity unit straight away, even if everything was normal last time.

NEVER HESITATE to contact your midwife or the maternity unit for advice, no matter how many times this happens. There are midwives on duty in the maternity unit 24 hours a day.



Do not use hand-held monitors, Dopplers or phone apps to check your baby's heartbeat.

Even if you detect a heartbeat, this does not mean your baby is well.