



Kicking is how your baby lets you know it's "OK". Uncomfortable at times, but always reassuring. It means your baby is active and growing.

In a survey we conducted among stillbirth mothers visiting our website, we learned a majority of them weren't told about kick counts. If you have not been told, or if it's not been explained, raise a question at your next checkup. It's your body and your baby; don't ever hesitate to voice your concerns. Counting kicks is simple and it costs nothing to do.

You can track your baby's activity by using a written log of its kick counts. If you detect a change, either a decrease in movement, or if you notice an unusually high level of activity, it may be a sign that your baby is in distress. In either case you should call your doctor at once. If you can't reach your doctor, head to the hospital to have your baby checked. A "false alarm" is better than a stillborn baby.

The National Stillbirth Society

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The information contained herein is offered for educational purposes only and is not intended to serve as, or to be relied upon as, medical advice.

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Fighting Stillbirth, the destroyer of dreams.

Before starting your log you should be aware there's no one "standard" for the number of kicks to expect, but on average you should notice at least 4 to 5 definite movements an hour. Keep in mind babies sleep, and so there may be a time when you feel little or no movement which is normal. That's why it's important to be aware of changes in your baby's daily pattern. Over time you'll get used to your baby's patterns.

MEASURING KICK COUNTS

Every day at the same time, preferably just after you've eaten, take time to be aware of your baby's movements. You needn't stop what you are doing, just be aware and count each movement as you detect it. If you haven't felt at least 4 or 5 movements by the end of an hour, you'll want to redo the count, this time lying down on your side and focusing on just counting movements. We call them "kicks" but punches, rolls and swooshes count, if it is a definite movement. You will hear that babies slow down as they get closer to full term. Whether that's true is debatable, but if your baby slows down, the change should not be sudden. Sudden change is trouble.

If, after redoing the kick count, you don't detect 10 movements within 2 hours its time to call your doctor. From a practical standpoint it's always easier to be seen and have your baby checked during daytime hours, but don't let the time of day stop you. If you detect a decline in movement, call, no matter what the time. We've been taught to be considerate and not inconvenience others but this is a different situation. Doctors, like firemen, have chosen a 24-hour occupation. And you've chosen to become a mother. As a mother your job is to protect your baby so pick up the phone and call. **Don't wait till morning.**

| STARTING WEEK: | | | | PATIENT: | | | |
|----------------|-----|------|-------|----------|-----|------|-------|
| DATE | DAY | 1 HR | 10 KC | DATE | DAY | 1 HR | 10 KC |
| | MON | | | | MON | | |
| | TUE | | | | TUE | | |
| | WED | | | | WED | | |
| | THU | | | | THU | | |
| | FRI | | | | FRI | | |
| | SAT | | | | SAT | | |
| | SUN | | | | SUN | | |
| | MON | | | | MON | | |
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| | FRI | | | | FRI | | |
| | SAT | | | | SAT | | |
| | SUN | | | | SUN | | |

1. Start logging "Kick Counts" the first week of the 3rd trimester (28 weeks).
2. Starting at the same time every day, count the number of "kicks" in 1 hour.
3. Write the number of kicks you notice in the column labeled "1 HR".
4. If you detect fewer than 5 distinct movements, repeat the test, this time lying on your side and paying close attention to your baby. If you haven't eaten recently take a glass of orange juice before doing the second test.
5. In the column labeled "10 KC" write in the number of minutes (elapsed time) it took you to detect 10 definite movements/kicks.
6. If the elapsed time is greater than 120 minutes, call your doctor and report the result. **DO NOT LEAVE A MESSAGE. SPEAK TO YOUR DOCTOR. IF YOUR DOCTOR IS UNAVAILABLE, GO TO THE HOSPITAL.**