

A photograph of a pregnant woman's bare belly. She is wearing a white ribbed crop top and dark blue jeans. A teal-colored sheer ribbon is tied around her waist, forming a large bow on the right side. Her hands are resting on her belly. The background is white.

# How your baby Grows

Welcome to the Miracle

saskatchewan  
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our goal is healthy children



# How your baby grows

Welcome to the Miracle

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# Words You Need to Know

**birth canal** - The passageway that a baby comes through when it is being born.

**conception** - When the male sperm joins with the female egg and you become pregnant.

**family physician** - A medical doctor whose education included care in pregnancy, labour and delivery. He or she can care for you before, during and after your pregnancy.

**health care professional** - A medical doctor or registered nurse who provides you with health care at a clinic or other medical facility.

**labour** - When the birth canal opens up and the muscles of your uterus contract to help you push the baby out of your body.

**obstetrician** - A medical doctor educated to give care to women during pregnancy, childbirth and recovery after birth. His or her care may be needed by some women.

**placenta** - The “afterbirth”. It develops inside your uterus after you become pregnant, and takes oxygen and food from your body to your baby and takes away the baby’s waste products. The placenta comes out shortly after you give birth.

**pregnancy** - The nine month period (usually about 38 to 42 weeks) between conception and giving birth, when a baby is growing in your womb.

**premature baby** - A baby born before it is ready, usually before your 37th week of pregnancy. Premature babies are often born weighing less than 2500 grams (5 1/2 pounds), and may be very sick.

**trimester** - Your pregnancy is divided into three parts. Each part lasts about three months, and is called a “trimester”.

**umbilical cord** - A cord that forms inside your uterus early in pregnancy. It contains blood vessels that connect the placenta with the baby, sending it food and removing its wastes.

**uterus** - The womb; where your baby grows inside you.

Congratulations - you're pregnant! You are about to experience one of life's greatest miracles: the development and birth of your baby. This can be a wonderful time in your life, a time of amazement and discovery.

As your baby grows, you'll want to understand the physical and emotional changes that will take place each month during pregnancy. The following sections describe what will happen to your body and your unborn baby in each trimester of your pregnancy.

## The First Trimester

### (1 - 12 weeks)

The first sign of pregnancy is usually a missed menstrual period. If your period is late and you think you might be pregnant, make an appointment with your family physician or clinic as soon as you can. For your health and your baby's health, start prenatal care early.

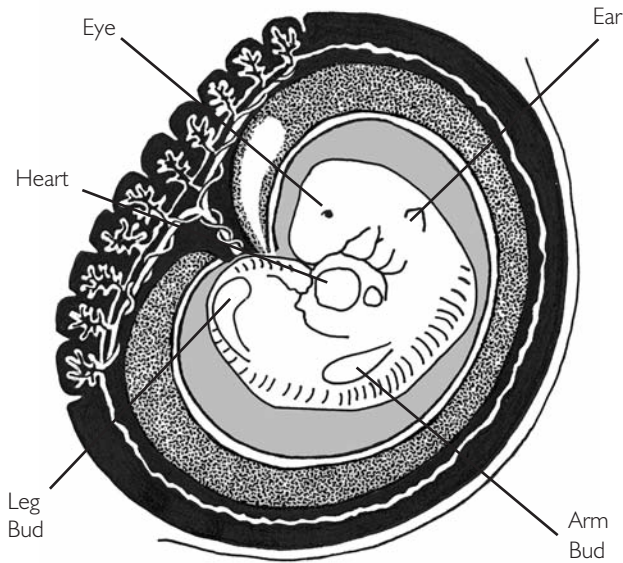
Now that you know you're pregnant, you'll want to know all you can about this new event in your life. What does it feel like to give birth? How will your life change? What does it mean to be a parent? You can learn a great deal by talking to your health care professional and your friends and by borrowing books on pregnancy and childbirth from the library.

Childbirth or prenatal classes are excellent sources of information. Talk to your health professional for information on classes in your area. The more you know, the more confident you will feel and the more you will enjoy your pregnancy.

Taking good care of yourself and your growing baby is important throughout pregnancy, but especially during the first three months when your baby's organs are forming and could very easily be damaged.

During the first three months you should have one visit with your doctor each month, unless you have a health problem that could hurt you or your baby. For example, if you have diabetes, heart disease or had problems with a past pregnancy, your doctor may want to see you more often.

During the first trimester, you may be tired and feel sick to your stomach. You also may notice that your breasts are sore and that you go to the bathroom more often than usual. Morning sickness can usually be relieved with dry crackers and healthy snacks, but if you feel sick all day and you can't hold down foods, talk to your doctor as there are effective and safe medications to treat this condition. Remember to avoid all drugs unless prescribed by a doctor.

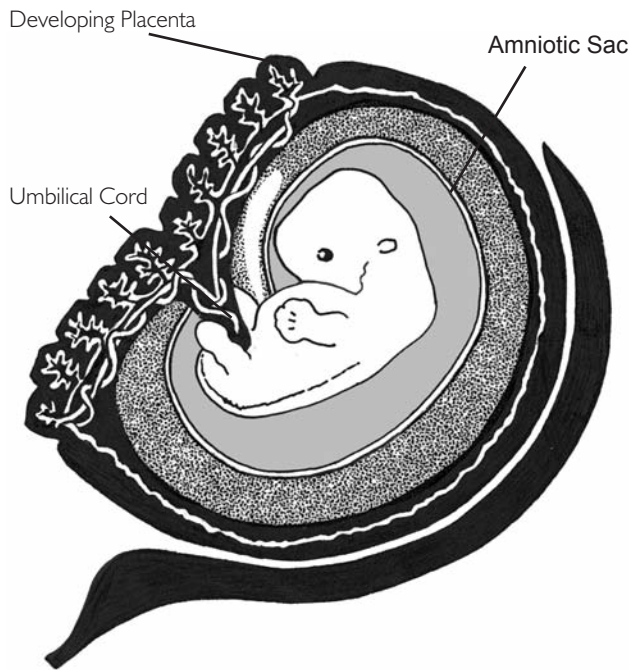


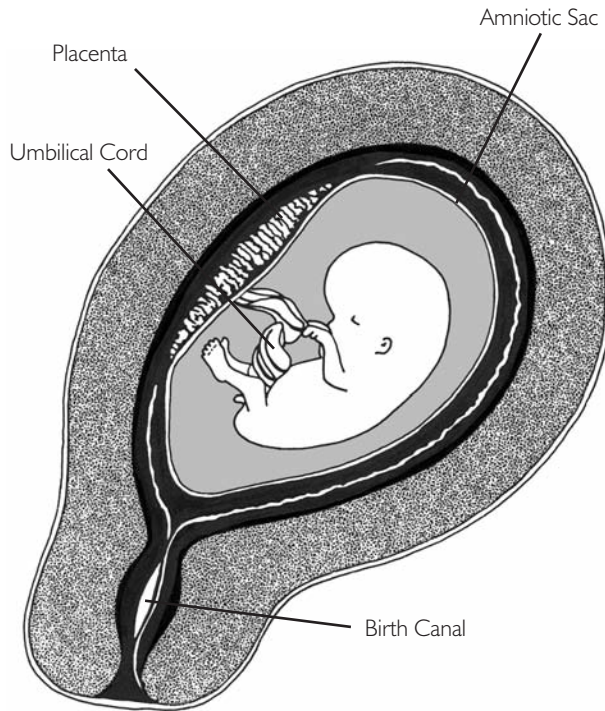
## First Month

- Your baby is in its earliest stages of development. It is called an embryo and it is approximately 6 mm (1/4 inch) long.
- First signs of the heart, face, arms, legs and lungs appear.
- Brain, spinal cord, ears and eyes begin to form.
- The bag of water begins to develop. It will cushion and protect the baby, control the womb's temperature and allow for proper growth.
- By month's end, the heart beats regularly and blood begins to circulate.
- Tissue that will later form the baby's backbone, skull, ribs and related muscles can be seen.

## Second Month

- Embryo is now about 5 cm (2 inches) long and weighs 9 grams (1/3 ounce).
- Arms and legs become longer and toes take shape.
- Liver and stomach start to work.
- Eyes take on coloring and eyelids form.
- Ears, nose and mouth take shape.
- Head makes up nearly half of the embryo.
- Brain grows quickly and directs the body's first movements.
- The placenta, which exchanges nutrients from your body for waste products produced by the baby begins to form.
- At the end of the second month, the embryo becomes a fetus.





## Third Month

- Fetus is about 10 cm (4 inches) long and weighs 28 grams (1 ounce).
- Fetus moves often and with more energy, although you won't be able to feel it yet.
- Bones continue to grow.
- Kidneys start to work.
- Fetus can open and close its mouth and swallow.
- First signs of fingerprints appear.



# The Second Trimester

**(13 - 24 weeks)**

The second trimester of pregnancy is generally an exciting time. Now that you've gotten used to the idea of being pregnant, you can relax and realize what a wonderful thing is happening to you. The inner confidence you'll feel makes this an ideal time to share the good news with supportive friends and co-workers. You've probably started to show and will need to wear maternity or larger-size clothes. Women you know who've had babies will be happy to loan you useful items.

By the fourth month, most of your baby's organs are formed and many have started working. Throughout the rest of your pregnancy, these organs will continue to mature as your baby rapidly grows in size and weight. By now morning sickness will probably have stopped, and you should have more energy. But you'll discover other changes: your growing belly may keep you from sleeping in your normal position and the added weight may cause your back to hurt.

This is also the time when you'll first be able to hear the baby's heartbeat when you visit your doctor. This can be very thrilling - your first real "proof" that there's a baby growing inside you. Around the middle of the second trimester, or at the beginning of your fifth month, you'll feel your baby's first kicks. These signs of life are sure to give you a warm feeling inside.



## Fourth Month

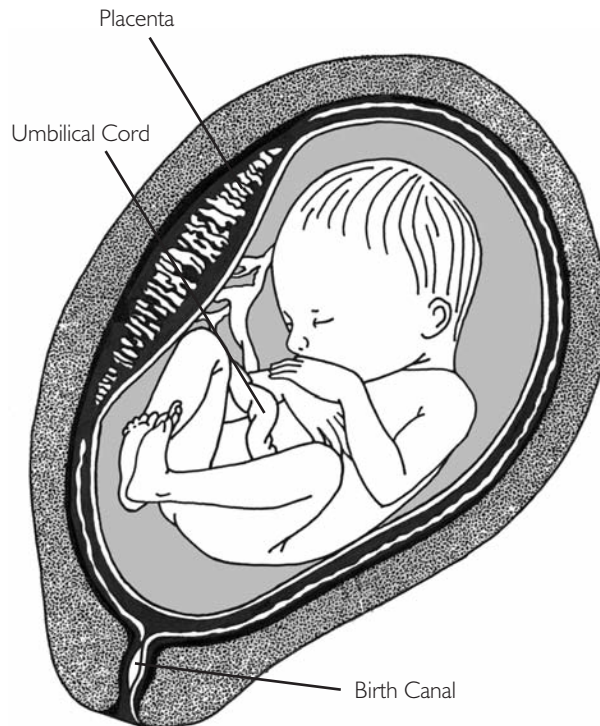
- The baby is 15-18 cm (6-7 inches) long and weighs 227 grams (half a pound).
- Fingerprints fully develop and fingernails appear.
- The placenta is now fully formed.
- The umbilical cord grows and thickens to carry enough blood and nourishment to the baby.
- Air passageways develop, but the baby can't breathe yet.
- You will start to feel the baby move. It may feel like someone is gently poking you.

## Fifth Month

- The baby is about 23 cm (9 inches) long and weighs about 454 grams (1 pound).
- Eyelashes, eyebrows and scalp hair appear.
- Blood supply to lungs increases.
- You will be able to hear the baby's heartbeat when you visit your doctor or health care professional.
- Silky body hair and a waxy coating protect the baby's skin from its watery surroundings.

## Six Month

- The baby is 30 cm (12 inches) long and weighs 680 grams (1 1/2 pounds)
- The baby opens and closes its eyes, and can hear sounds.
- The baby stretches, kicks and sucks its thumb.



# The Third Trimester

**(25 - 38 weeks)**

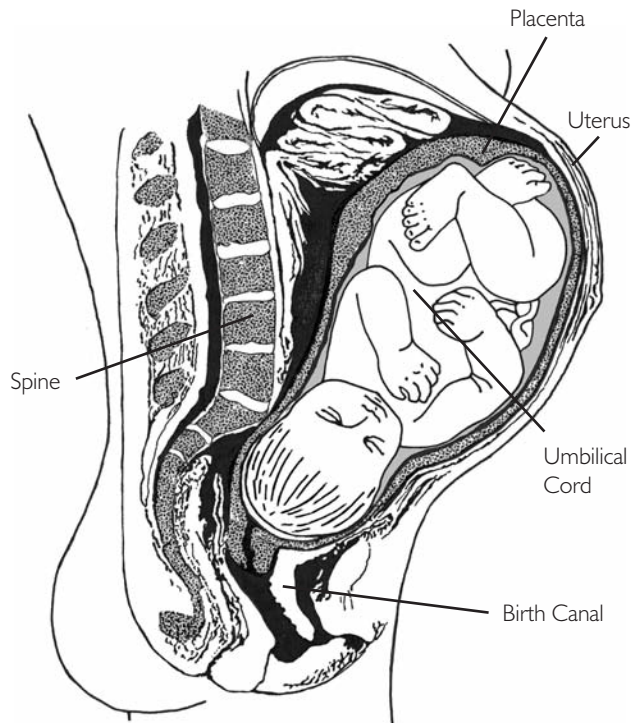
During the last three months or third trimester of your pregnancy, your doctor will want you to come for visits more often to check your weight gain and blood pressure, measure your baby's heartbeat and check for any unexpected problems. Your doctor may want to see you every two weeks during the seventh and eighth months, and every week in the last month.

For most healthy women, a total weight gain of 10-12 kg (22-26 pounds) by the end of the third trimester is recommended. Women who are underweight before pregnancy may need to gain more as compared to overweight women who may in fact gain less.

These final months of pregnancy may bring on a shortness of breath as your baby crowds your lungs, and you may have trouble sleeping. You'll also find that the baby crowds your stomach, so you may want to eat five or six small meals during the day instead of three regular meals.

## Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Months

- The baby continues to make rapid gains in weight and length.
- Bones are fully developed, but remain soft and flexible.
- Lungs have matured and can now support the baby outside the womb.
- The outline of a fist, foot or the head may be seen when the baby moves.
- During the ninth month, the baby moves into its final position - usually head down - and remains there until birth.



While you are pregnant, you need to take good care of yourself. Please make sure that you:

- See your doctor as soon as you think you are pregnant, and as often as he or she tells you for the rest of your pregnancy.
- Eat a well-balanced diet of foods that are good for you. Your health care professional can tell you which foods are good for you and which are not.
- Don't smoke or use drugs. Avoid drinking beer, wine, hard liquor or other alcoholic beverages. No one knows how much alcohol a pregnant woman can drink without harming the baby. The safest choice is not to drink at all during pregnancy.
- Don't take any medication unless recommended and prescribed by a doctor who knows you are pregnant.
- Get enough exercise, but don't overdo it. Walking or swimming are good ways to exercise.
- Get plenty of rest. You may need to go to bed earlier.

Most important, enjoy your new baby. Welcome to the miracle!

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