FETAL MOVEMENT

Daily monitoring of fetal movements is a good way to estimate fetal well-being.

Fetal movement is usually felt around the 17th to 20th week from your last period. Usually first-time moms feel movement a bit later.

Several different movements may be noted such as:
- Kicks (isolated limb movements)
- Rolls (total body movement)
- Stretching (body position change/extensions)

Most women report that fetal activity is not constant. There are times of activity, followed by times of “quiet” sleep. The times of sleep can last from 10 to 70 minutes. Fetal movements are usually increased when you are not moving much, such as when you lay down to sleep or just wake up. You may also notice more movements after eating or drinking.

The average movements felt during the day can change throughout the pregnancy. The most active period is usually near the 32nd week of pregnancy. After this, the movements may not be as strong, but the baby should move as often.

Most patients should merely pay attention to fetal movements. You can establish an average for your baby by counting the number of movements in an hour 3 different times during the day. You will not feel regular movement patterns until 28 weeks of pregnancy.

A complete absence or significant reduction of the usual fetal movement may be a sign of fetal distress.

If fetal movements are greatly reduced, you should eat something, drink something cold, and lie on your left side. You can also gently push on your belly or use the vibrator function of your cell phone on your belly to wake the baby up.

You should notice at least 6-10 movements in a 1-2 hour time period. If you do not get that many movements, you should count for another hour. If you still don’t get that many movements, you should go to Labor and Delivery at the hospital, so we can check on the baby with electronic fetal monitoring.