

Eighth Month of Pregnancy: Approaching the Final Weeks



Highlights

Increased physical strain and fatigue for the expectant mother.

Fetus grows to 40-45 cm and weighs ~2,500 g by the end of the month.

Uterus reaches ribcage level, causing shortness of breath and frequent urination.

Common maternal issues: swelling, gestosis (late pregnancy toxicosis), back strain.

Important prenatal monitoring: ultrasounds, Doppler, blood pressure, and third-trimester lab tests.

Preparing for birth: selecting a hospital, packing a hospital bag, and considering birth plan options.

In This Article

Maternal physical and emotional changes

Weeks included (31-34 weeks)

Fetal growth and developmental milestones

Nutrition and dietary guidance

Maternal weight and abdominal changes

Common complications: gestosis, preterm labor, edema

Recommended tests and examinations
Tools and support for expectant parents

Overview

During the eighth month of pregnancy, expectant mothers experience increased physical strain and a mix of excitement and anxiety. Thoughts often revolve around the upcoming birth, caring for a newborn, and changes in daily life. Concerns about one's own appearance, physical limitations, and the ability to be a good parent are common. Psychologists recommend connecting with other mothers at the same stage for emotional support and sharing advice.

Maternal Changes

Uterus growth: Fundal height reaches 38-40 cm, nearly at its maximum. The uterus presses on the diaphragm, leading to shortness of breath even during short walks.

Physical sensations: Frequent urination, chronic fatigue, and noticeable fetal kicks, often in the region of the liver or internal organs.

Weight gain: ~300-400 g per week; more than 500 g per week may indicate edema or excessive calorie intake. Expected total gain: 8-13 kg, depending on pre-pregnancy weight.

Hair growth: Increased hair on the head and body is normal; excess hair typically falls out postpartum.

Weeks Included

Week 31 -> Week 34

Nutrition

Monitor weight gain closely; use a scale to track sudden increases.

Edema is common-drink mostly water and limit sweet, salty, or carbonated beverages.

Limit salt intake to 3-5 g per day; season food minimally.

Reduce excessive fats and carbohydrates; prioritize protein-rich foods.

Eat small meals 6-7 times a day to prevent heaviness and heartburn.

Light dinners: low-fat dairy, vegetables, and fruits. Avoid common allergens

such as citrus, chocolate, strawberries, and honey.

Fetal Development

Week 31: ~40 cm, 1,600 g; Week 34: ~44 cm, 2,250 g.

Fetus occupies the uterus fully, often head-down, preparing for birth.

Movements may feel less intense but can cause discomfort.

Body completes formation: fat accumulates, facial features and limbs become rounded, nails fully develop.

Skin is covered with vernix; hair begins to grow.

Development milestones: breathing, sucking, swallowing, and coordination between nervous system and brain.

Skull bones remain soft for safe passage during birth.

Liver stores iron; adrenal glands are fully functional.

By the end of the month, lungs are fully developed, allowing independent breathing if born prematurely.

Maternal Abdominal Changes

The abdomen grows significantly; size and shape are highly individual.

Factors influencing abdominal size: body type, amniotic fluid volume, single vs. multiple pregnancies, prior pregnancies.

Encourage family interaction with the baby through gentle touch and talking to the abdomen.

Common Complications

Gestosis (late pregnancy toxicosis): Risk factors include hypertension, multiple pregnancies, diabetes, or hereditary predisposition.

Symptoms: protein in urine, swelling, high blood pressure. Watch for signs like right upper abdominal pain, nausea, dizziness, ringing in ears, or visual disturbances.

Bed rest on the left side may be recommended; severe cases may require early delivery.

Monitor edema: tight rings or clothing impressions, weight gain >500 g/week.

Tests and Monitoring

2-3 prenatal checkups per month, including cervical examination.

Measurements: weight, blood pressure, fetal heart rate, abdominal circumference, fundal height.

Laboratory tests: urine, complete blood count, glucose, biochemical tests, and third-trimester screenings.

Ultrasound and Doppler for fetal growth, placenta, amniotic fluid, and blood circulation quality.

Sexual Activity

Generally not recommended due to uterine readiness for labor.

Some doctors allow activity if there are no complications, as it can provide emotional benefits.

Avoid if high risk of preterm labor or other medical concerns.

Recommendations

Walk twice daily at a gentle pace; rest when needed.

Focus on birth preparation: choose a hospital, select a doctor, and consider whether a partner will attend.

For cesarean births, discuss pre-hospitalization timing.

Pack a hospital bag with essentials: slippers, socks, postpartum pads, mesh underwear, breast pads, and newborn items. Use hospital-provided checklists if available.

Tools and Assistance

Pregnancy trackers: track fetal growth, maternal weight, and symptoms.

Prenatal vitamins: support maternal and fetal health.

Support garments: maternity belts for back and abdominal support.

Medical professionals: obstetricians, midwives, endocrinologists, and phlebologists.

Community support: online forums, prenatal classes, and peer groups.

Summary: The eighth month brings increasing physical challenges, but also excitement and preparation for birth. Proper nutrition, monitoring, and support measures ensure the health of both mother and baby while preparing for a safe delivery and early newborn care.

