

What to Expect at 28 Weeks of Pregnancy: Preparing for Labor and Self-Care



Highlights

28 weeks marks the end of the seventh month of pregnancy and the start of the third trimester.

Fetus weighs around 1 kg and measures approximately 38-35 cm.

Fetal movements are noticeable and communicate emotions.

Maternal body experiences rapid changes: growing belly, stretch marks, breast enlargement, fatigue, and dizziness.

Prenatal monitoring, proper nutrition, and moderate physical activity are essential.

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How Many Months Is 28 Weeks?

Obstetricians calculate pregnancy in weeks, but many expectant mothers prefer months. One month typically equals four weeks. By this calculation, 28 weeks corresponds to the end of the seventh month of gestation and marks the beginning of the third trimester, which continues until birth.

Maternal Sensations at 28 Weeks

At this stage, fetal movements are regular and noticeable. The baby's movements convey emotions, such as comfort or discomfort.

If the baby is in an uncomfortable position, gentle kicks may prompt the mother to shift posture.

Fetal activity may peak at night, sometimes disturbing sleep.

Breasts continue to grow as mammary glands prepare for lactation; some mothers may notice small amounts of colostrum.

Fatigue, dizziness, or lightheadedness may occur, often due to reduced hemoglobin levels. Timely medical consultation is essential to prevent developmental delays in the fetus.

Maternal Thoughts About Childbirth

At 28 weeks, many expectant mothers begin considering labor and delivery. Anxiety is common, regardless of prior childbirth experience. Prenatal classes help normalize emotional states, teach preparation for labor, and provide reassurance.

Abdominal Changes

By this week, the uterus has grown significantly, and the belly is prominently rounded. Skin stretching may lead to stretch marks, which can fade but usually remain post-delivery. Preventive creams can help minimize their appearance.

Fetal Development at 28 Weeks

Size: About 1 kg in weight, 38 cm in length.

Brain: Cortical folds increase, hemispheres are well-defined.

Digestive System: Intestinal peristalsis improves, pancreas produces enzymes, liver produces bile.

Blood Formation: Bone marrow now produces blood cells, a function previously managed by the liver and spleen.

Respiratory System: Bronchial tubes develop; lungs approach readiness for independent breathing.

Eyes and Senses: Eyelashes appear, fetus occasionally opens eyes, can focus, tastes amniotic fluid, reacts to light and sounds.

Skin and Fat: Skin lightens; lanugo and vernix decrease; fat layer develops to regulate temperature and create rounded body shapes.

Skeleton and Kidneys: Bone strengthening begins; kidneys produce ~0.5 liters of urine daily.

The fetus also recognizes external sounds, especially the mother's voice.

Frequent talking or singing to the baby fosters early bonding.

Risk of Premature Birth

At 28 weeks, premature birth is possible under high-risk conditions. Medical advances allow many preterm infants to survive with proper care. Maternal recovery may be more complex than after full-term delivery.

Common Maternal Discomforts

Back Pain: Due to shifted center of gravity and muscle/ligament strain.

Abdominal Pain: Often from fetal movements; severe or persistent pain should prompt medical consultation.

Leg Pain and Swelling: Increased body fluids can cause edema, varicose veins, or gestational hypertension (pre-eclampsia).

Fatigue, Dizziness: Can occur when lying on the back; sleeping on the side is recommended.

Discharge: Normal discharge is whitish, slightly acidic. Foul odor, blood, or pus requires immediate medical attention.

Amniotic Fluid Leakage: May indicate premature labor and requires urgent hospital care.

Braxton Hicks Contractions: Usually brief, irregular, and mild, preparing the

uterus for labor.

Uterus Measurements

Uterine fundus height averages 28 cm at this stage.

Uterus growth displaces nearby organs, causing frequent urination and heartburn. Blood flow may be affected if lying on the back, causing dizziness.

Prenatal Monitoring and Tests

Check-ups every two weeks; include blood, urine, and vaginal swab tests.

Obstetrician monitors uterine growth, abdominal circumference, maternal weight, and blood pressure.

Blood sugar and antibody tests may be performed as needed.

Ultrasound

Performed when indicated by maternal symptoms or concerns. Assesses fetal growth, placenta maturity, umbilical cord, amniotic fluid, and fetal position.

Fetal sex can be identified if desired.

Sexual Health

Intimacy is generally safe unless medical complications exist (risk of preterm birth, placenta issues, cervical problems). Avoid positions that apply pressure to the abdomen and consider maternal comfort.

Nutrition Recommendations

Avoid processed foods, excess salt, caffeine, alcohol, and sugary or refined products.

Focus on vegetables, fruits, dairy, eggs, grains, lean meats, and fish.

Hydrate with at least 1.5 liters of water daily.

Eat small, frequent meals (5 times/day) and prefer steaming as a cooking method.

Physical Activity

Maintain moderate activity to support circulation, reduce edema, and strengthen muscles.

Recommended options: Prenatal yoga to improve flexibility and breathing Aqua aerobics for relaxation and muscle relief Walking outdoors in parks or safe areas

Prenatal yoga to improve flexibility and breathing

Aqua aerobics for relaxation and muscle relief

Walking outdoors in parks or safe areas

Supportive maternity belts can help reduce back strain.

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Vitamins and Supplements

Vitamins are essential for fetal tissue growth, organ development, and maternal health.

Prenatal supplements should be taken only as prescribed by a physician to prevent deficiencies and support overall well-being.

Tools and Assistance

Pregnancy tracking apps for weekly updates

Fetal movement diaries

Weight, blood pressure, and hemoglobin monitoring devices

Prenatal exercise classes and yoga programs

Telemedicine consultations with obstetricians and dietitians