

The Developing Baby (PDF)

First week and second week – Fertilized egg embeds itself in the uterine lining and grows very fast

Three weeks – The first heart beat occurs at about 21 or 22 days
The foundation of the circulatory system including blood vessels, blood cells and lymph vessels begin to form. The foundation for bones, muscles kidneys and ovaries or testicles, start to form the placenta.

Five weeks – Beginning to form recognizable features. Brain is growing and developing distinct regions. Eyes and ears beginning to form. Blocks of tissue along the midline will form the backbone, ribs, and muscles of the back and sides.

Seven weeks - Lenses of the eyes are forming and ears continue to develop. Arms, legs, hands and feet are taking shape.

Eight weeks – Eyelids beginning to form. Arms showing evidence of wrists and elbows. Fingers beginning to form. Heart is pumping 150 times a minute.

Nine weeks – Hands and feet are forming fingers and toes. Pancreas and gallbladder are formed. Beginning to form reproductive organs but are not distinguishable yet.

10 weeks – Baby is about 1 ¼ inches. Bones of the skeleton are forming. Outer ears are forming

9-12 weeks – All organ systems in place. Brain, nerves, muscle beginning to function. Palate completely formed. Male or female characteristics apparent. Begins moving with flexing arms and kicking legs.

14 to 18 weeks – Eyes and ears have a baby like appearance. Eyebrows and scalp hair begin to appear. Baby begins having hiccups, a forerunner of fetal breathing movements. Soon mom can feel a rhythmic bump they will recognize as hiccups.

19 to 22 weeks – Baby is now about 7 ½ inches head to rump and weighs about a pound. Skin is covered in a fine down like hair called lanugo. Kidneys are beginning to make urine. In females, the vagina, uterus and fallopian tubes have formed. Baby's sense of hearing is developed and can hear mother's heart, stomach and blood rushing through the blood vessels. Baby reacts to mother's voice.

23 to 27 weeks – Skin is thin and immature. Lungs beginning to develop surfactant to allow them to expand. Baby makes breathing movements which begins to exercise the breathing muscles, and swallows amniotic fluid (the water around the baby) to develop and strengthen the swallowing muscles. Babies born at 23-25 weeks have a 92% survival rate. These early born babies will likely have some complications of prematurity such as brain bleeds, chronic lung problems, eye problems including blindness, motor or learning skill disabilities.

28 to 31 weeks – Eyelids can open and close. Lungs are more developed. In males the testicles are moving through to the scrotum. Babies born in this time are still premature and will usually need assistance in breathing and are at a high risk for infection.

32 to 36 weeks – In males the testicles have moved into the scrotum. Babies born in this period vary greatly on the kind of assistance they may need ranging from help with maintaining their temperature, help feeding, or can be critical with the issues of prematurity.

37 to 40 weeks – Baby is fully developed and lungs are prepared for breathing. Baby is gaining weight in a “fatty” layer. Babies born in this time period will generally go home with mom.

Premature babies will go to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. These babies often have trouble breathing and eating. For every day in mom’s womb, it takes three days outside the womb to get the same maturity, so a baby that is two weeks early will take 21 days to get to the same maturity as a term baby.