



Weeks 6-9

WEEK 6

Eyes, and organs, and limbs, oh my!

How baby grows

Your baby is still only about the size of a kidney bean. But this is a big week, as organs and parts of the body begin to take shape.

Will her eyes be brown, blue, green, or hazel? It's much too early to know, but by week six her eyes are beginning to develop and the earliest version of the retina is forming.

It's not just the eyes that are developing now:

- **Neural tube.** The neural tube, which connects the brain and spinal cord, will close this week.
- **Heart.** Still located on the outside of the body, the heart is dividing into chambers. But it'll still be many weeks before the heartbeat can be heard with an instrument.
- **Limbs.** Upper and lower limb buds are forming on the body and will eventually develop into arms and legs.
- **Brain.** The brain begins to fill your baby's skull.
- **Facial features.** As nostrils become distinct, facial features are already forming.
- **Organs.** The kidneys, liver, pancreas, lungs, stomach and intestines are developing.
- **Placenta.** The lining of the placenta develops to provide the oxygen and nutrients your baby needs for its growth.
- **First movements.** Halfway through this week your baby will make her first movements, but you'll have to wait until your second trimester before you can actually feel her wiggling around.

How you change

- **Breast changes.** Hormonal changes may cause your breasts to become larger and more sensitive. You may even experience tingling sensations and the areola may start to darken.
- **Weight change.** You may have gained two or three pounds. But if you've been experiencing morning sickness, you may actually have lost some weight.
- **Morning sickness.** If you're experiencing nausea, it may get worse this week as your hormone levels rise. Even though it's called "morning sickness," it's perfectly normal to feel nauseated at any time of the day or night.

Protecting your baby

Starting now, and for the next few months, you'll need to be extra careful about toxins and infections. That's because your baby is especially vulnerable to birth defects in the first three months.

- Don't change your cat's litter. If you have a cat, ask a family member to change the litter to avoid risk of toxoplasmosis, an infection caused by parasites common in cat feces. It can be passed from Mom to baby.
- Check with your doctor. Don't take any medication— even those that you can buy without a prescription – without talking to your doctor first.
- Don't handle insecticides or other poisonous substances.

WEEK 7

Hooray, it's a heartbeat!

How baby grows

Right about now the digestive system is beginning to develop, and you two are really getting connected, as the umbilical cord has started taking shape. This rope-like cord will carry oxygen and nutrients to the embryo and carry away waste products.

And baby's growing quickly, too! In fact, this week the embryo will more than double in size, growing from a bit more than 1/8 of an inch long to about half an inch.

You'll be able to see her in all her glory on an ultrasound now, and check in on all the new developments your baby's experiencing:

- **Facial features.** Tiny nostrils and a minuscule mouth have started to develop.
- **Ears.** Indentations are appearing where ears will be.
- **Eyes.** Your little one is developing more distinct eyes, with pigmented irises.
- **Head.** Your baby's head is still much larger than the rest of the body, but her body will grow rapidly this week.
- **Heart.** A quickly beating heart (about 150 beats per minute) with two chambers is developing.
- **Airways.** Bronchial tubes are developing to carry air through the lungs and carbon dioxide out of the lungs.
- **Mouth.** Tooth buds and palate are just beginning to grow.
- **Skin.** Your baby has paper-thin skin with clearly visible blood vessels.

How you change

- **Weight gain.** You're probably not quite ready for maternity clothes, but you may have gained a few pounds if you haven't been too nauseated to eat.
- **Morning sickness.** During the first trimester, many women get morning sickness, caused in part by pregnancy hormones.
- **More bathroom breaks.** As your enlarging uterus presses on the bladder and hormones affect your fluid balance, you'll probably need to use the bathroom more often than before.
- **Increased energy.** If you're getting enough rest, you may begin to have more energy now.

WEEK 8

Go with the (blood) flow

How baby grows

This week, baby will be about half an inch long and is starting to fine-tune her bone, joint, and limb development.

And there are many other changes happening as well:

- **Eyelids.** Eyelids are beginning to form.
- **Fingers and toes.** Tiny finger and toe buds appear.
- **Nose.** The tip of your baby's nose is taking shape.
- **Blood flow.** Blood is beginning to flow through a rudimentary circulatory system.
- **Genitals.** Gonads are beginning to transform themselves into either testes or ovaries.
- **Ears.** Ears are developing both inside and out.
- **Elbows.** Elbows have just started to appear.
- **Vertebrae.** Vertebrae and ribs are beginning to grow.
- **Muscle.** Muscle and two layers of skin are forming.

How you change

- **New emotions.** You may experience lots of emotional highs and lows now. Try not to worry about it too much. Mood swings are a common pregnancy symptom, because hormone levels are going dramatically up and down.
- **Breast enlargement and bigger waistline.**
- **Cramping.** Even though you may not be showing yet, your uterus has grown from about the size of a lemon to as big as a grapefruit. As your uterus grows, it's totally normal to feel some cramping, discomfort, or

tightening.

- **First doctor's visit.** This is a good time for your first office visit for urine and blood tests, a general physical examination, baseline blood pressure evaluation, weight check, pelvic exam, Pap smear, and a review of your family health history.

WEEK 9

Baby starts showing off her muscles

How baby grows

Baby is now about the size of a peapod and weighs a little less than half an ounce.

Your baby's muscles, nerves, and organs are continuing to form. In fact, if you press against the uterine wall when you touch your belly, your baby will move away, but you won't be able to feel her move around for several more weeks.

Genitals are also beginning to develop, but it's still almost impossible to tell on ultrasound whether it's a boy or a girl.

By week nine your baby's growth includes:

- **Increased body growth.** Her head is quite large compared with the rest of her body, and it curves onto her chest. Her arms have grown, her hands are

now flexed at the wrists, and her legs are lengthening. Her feet may be long enough to meet in front of the body.

- **Digits.** Baby's developing clearly visible fingers and toes.
- **Eyelids.** Developing eyelids begin to cover the eyes and fuse together. Her eyes won't open until about week 27.
- **Ears.** Development of the inner and external ears is almost complete.
- **Brain.** Baby's far from being conscious, but she's experiencing the first nerve connections in her brain.

How you change

- **Increased blood volume.** Although you still may not have gained much weight, your blood volume continues to rise. By the end of nine months your body will actually have produced 30 to 35 % more blood.
- **Fatigue.** You may continue to feel tired, nauseated, and dizzy, but take heart: This will most likely fade away soon.
- **Testing.** If you're over age 35 or have a family history of genetic illness, talk to your doctor about prenatal genetic diagnosis. Chorionic villus sampling (CVS) is usually done between 10 and 12 weeks to screen for birth defects. Amniocentesis is performed about four weeks later. Both tests have risks of miscarriage that should be carefully discussed with your doctor.

Good to know

If you've been identified as being high risk for other disorders, such as Tay-Sachs or cystic fibrosis (based on your family health history), your doctor may want you to be tested for those conditions as well.