

OBSTETRIC VISIT 15-20 WEEKS

HOW IS MY BABY DEVELOPING?

- 16 weeks – baby is 12 cm long and weighs about 110 grams, the head is erect and the lower limbs are well developed
- 18 weeks – baby weighs 200 grams and is 14 cm long, the ears stand out from the head
- 20 weeks – baby is 16 centimeters long and weighs on average 320 grams, the feet are 3.3 centimeters in size. The baby moves about every minute and is active 10-30% of the time. The skin starts to turn flesh color and a cheesy vernix covers the skin for protection. Some scalp hair is developing and early toenail development begins.
- During this time the brain and internal organs continue to develop

WHEN WILL I KNOW IF I AM HAVING A BOY OR GIRL?

- Between 18 and 22 weeks we will schedule an ultrasound to look at the babies internal organs and usually we can see the gender on this ultrasound

WHEN WILL I FEEL THE FIRST MOVEMENT FROM THE BABY?

- Most women will feel the first fetal movement at about 18 weeks but some women may feel movement a little earlier especially for the second or third baby.

WHAT IS THE QUAD SCREEN?

- The quad screen blood test is offered from 15-20 weeks
- It is a blood test only and is not harmful to the baby
- Whether to have the quad screen done or not is your decision, this test is not mandatory
- The quad screen tells us if your baby is high risk or low risk for certain chromosome defects such as Down's Syndrome and some spinal and brain defects
- If the test results show a baby that is high risk for these defects then you will be offered more testing to tell the babies chromosome number for sure.

DO YOU RECOMMEND FOR ME TO HAVE AMNIOCENTESIS?

- Amniocentesis is the only way to know 100% what your babies chromosomes are and it gives us the final answer as to whether the baby is affected with Down's syndrome or other chromosome problems. It can also diagnose neural tube defects and other genetic disorder such as cystic fibrosis with a high accuracy.
- Overall it is a personal decision whether you would like an amniocentesis or not but many women may consider this test if they are 35 years or older or if the quad screen shows a high risk of chromosomal problem or open neural tube defects
- During amniocentesis ultrasound guidance is used to remove 10 to 20 mL of amniotic fluid from around the baby. This still leaves the baby with plenty of amniotic fluid left.
- The risk of chromosome abnormalities increases with a woman's age so it may be reasonable to perform amniocentesis for women at the age of 35 or older
- There is a small risk of breaking the water or even fetal loss with amniocentesis

SHOULD I BREASTFEED?

- The decision to breastfeed is a personal decision but you should know all of the advantages of breastfeeding
- Breastfeeding helps the baby's gastrointestinal tract to grow good bacteria and reduces the risk of bad bacteria. Breastfed babies have less risk of necrotizing enterocolitis (a dangerous bowel

infection) and colic.

- Breast milk has antimicrobial activity and decreases the risk of diarrhea, lower respiratory tract illness, sepsis, and ear infections.
- Breastfeeding decreases the risk of cancers such as lymphoma and leukemia in children. Breastfeeding decreases the risk of bad cholesterol and cardiovascular disease. Breastfed babies have lower risk of Type I diabetes. There may be some decreased risk of obesity and allergies.
- Some studies of adults show that longer duration of breastfeeding is associated with better IQ. This study showed that the average IQ for an adult who was breastfed less than 1 month was 99.4 while the average IQ of a baby breastfed for 7 to 9 months was 106.

COMMON PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

- Round ligament pain
 - These are usually sharp pains that occur on both sides of the lower abdomen.
 - They can be relieved by taking Tylenol extra strength 2 pills (1000 mg) every 6 hours by mouth as needed.
 - As the baby grows your uterus is supported by ligaments at the top of the uterus that stretch down across the lower part of your abdomen and down into the labia. Stretching on this ligament causes round ligament pain.
- Nausea and vomiting
 - If it is very mild it may be treated with a few saltine crackers and a few sips of water or sprite in the morning. Small frequent meals that avoid fatty or greasy food may also help.
 - If this is not enough you can try to take half a pill of Unisom (an over the counter sleeping medicine) plus Vitamin B6 25 mg by mouth 3 times per day.
 - Eating food or drinking tea with ginger may help.
 - If these things do not work then you may need prescription medicine.
 - At any time if you cannot keep down sips of water or feel that you are getting to dehydrated you should go to the doctor or to the hospital to see if IV fluids are needed.
- Constipation
 - Occurs because increased progesterone in pregnancy slows down the bowels
 - Can be initially treated with increase in exercise, fiber, and water intake
 - If these don't work use Miralax over the counter one dose daily