

tight as your ligaments relax; it's good to eat more often, at regular hours, to avoid heartburn.

**W20 - W23:** It's time for a new prenatal consultation. The doctor will prescribe calcium, if necessary, or will recommend that you eat foods containing a lot of calcium, leafy greens and proteins. The child will measure almost 25 cm. Listen to music, relax and communicate to your child as often as possible. Tell it how much you're waiting for it and how happy you are it's coming into your family! Even if it doesn't understand the words, it perfectly decodes the thought and intention.

### **At last, the third term!**

**W24 - W27:** The child is over 500 g; its brain continues to develop, and its lungs secrete surfactant, a substance that helps breathing. The ultrasound tells you if it's a boy or a girl! Your breasts will probably start secreting a substance rich in minerals and antibodies, called colostrum, which will constitute your baby's first meal after birth. Protect your legs, keeping them above the body, you can sit on a rubber ball to be able to relax your perineal muscles and continue with the Kegel exercises.

You can do some exercise for the pelvis: stand against a wall with your knees slightly bent, and, when breathing in, slightly press your coccyx against the wall. When breathing out, relax. Repeat ten times. Prepare your body, natural birth is very important for the baby!

**W28 - W30:** You've entered the 8th month! Your child is moving intensely and you can play hide-and-seek, caressing and pressing your abdomen gently: the baby will respond, respecting

the code you propose – you or the father! It can hear your voice; talk to it, sing to it! It's time to plan your delivery; the child is already 1500 g and if it were to be born now, it would be perfectly viable. For it, it's the time of weight gain, and for you to go to prenatal consultation every 2 weeks.

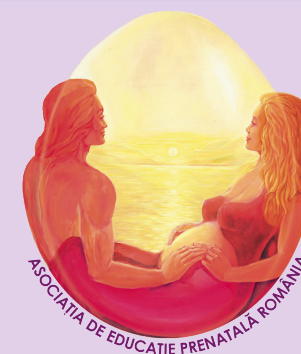
**W31 - W35:** You've entered the 9th month! Your abdomen has grown a lot, you've probably put on around 10 kg or more; continue to eat often and drink water. Enjoy these moments, listen to music, communicate with the child and plan the delivery with the health carers. Consultations are now weekly.

**W36 - W40:** You've done a marvellous job; inside you a small being ready to come into the world has grown. Tell it how you look forward to its coming. The contractions will start soon.

**Have an easy birth and both of you be well!**



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## **THE BABY'S PRENATAL DEVELOPMENT STAGES**



OMAEP

*International Revised Edition*

## The Pregnancy Diary

### The first term

The 40 weeks (W1-W40) of your pregnancy officially start on the first day of your last period. Conception proper takes place during the ovulation period after the last period.

**W1 - W2:** If the pregnancy is planned, now is the time to eat a lot of foods rich in folic acid (400 micrograms/day), and if you haven't done it already, completely give up alcohol, smoking, medicines, look at beautiful things, think that you will have a healthy, well-rounded child.

**W3:** The big event takes place: conception, which means the union between the mother's ovule and one of the father's spermatozooids inside the fallopian tubes that unite the uterus to the ovary. In 5 days, the fertilised egg migrates and gets implanted on the soft wall of the womb.

**W4:** After the egg implantation, the cells divide in two groups that will form the child and the placenta respectively. The egg secretes a hormone that inhibits menstruation. You can feel a slight tiredness, enlarged breasts and you can feel sick – or not.

**W5:** The pregnancy test is POSITIVE. The child is officially an embryo. The amniotic sac and the placenta are formed, which will feed the child until birth. The spine, the nervous system, the kidneys, the liver and bowels start to form and the facial features begin to appear. Very soon the heart will start to beat miraculously. It's time for the first consultation at the GP; later the consultations will be monthly and in the 7th and 8th months twice a month.

**Your blood pressure, your height and weight will be measured, a blood sample will be collected for tests and you will have a gynaecological examination done.** You're officially declared pregnant and you get a pregnancy card!

**If everything goes well, the natural birth is ideal for both the mother and the infant and it's good to express your option from the beginning.**

**W6:** The little heart starts beating! Now the development of the nervous system also starts from a simple tube to an extremely complex structure. The limb buds appear – the little hands that will hug you soon and the restless little legs! It's ideal to pay attention what you eat, drink plenty of water, be happier and start communicating with the infant; it doesn't hear you yet, but it feels your intention!

**W7:** Your baby's facial features are visible now, including the mouth and the tongue. The eyes have the retina and crystalline. The muscular system is almost completely developed and the child starts exercising movements. The child has its own blood group, different from the mother's. The blood cells are now produced by the liver. Morning nausea may become more persistent; eat as naturally as possible and drink 6-8 glasses of water a day!

**W8:** The embryo is 8 cm now. On the first ultrasound you can hear its heart beat! Your body needs more rest, you can put on weight easily and you may feel your feet heavier. Live in harmony as much as possible!

**W9:** It's time for your second prenatal consultation! Your weight, blood pressure, fundus of uterus are measured. Prophylaxis of anaemia is started

with ferrous iron 60 mg administered p.o. daily.

**W10 - W11:** The infant's organs are generally formed. You can feel a change of mood, you can be more irritable or the opposite!

It's time to start the Kegel exercises to strengthen the perineum; successive contractions/relaxations of the sphincters, 25/day, to strengthen the muscles.

### The second term starts

**W12 - W13:** The child's figure is shaped, the brain has developed, it can receive messages and feel pain, the urinary tract has developed and its nails start to grow. If you had nausea, this will decrease now. You've probably put on 2-3 kg. The father can empathetically feel back pain and stomach cramps!

**W14 - W16:** Your waistline has probably changed; you can feel slight contractions that prepare the uterus for the unique moment of delivery. Everything goes well; it's time for another prenatal consultation; on the echograph screen you can now see how your infant's heart beats. Your child now measures around 14 cm. You've probably started feeling soft kicks of little legs.

**W17 - W19:** Your child is now around 15 cm, almost as big as the placenta. Its eyes are closer; its ears begin to protrude at the level of the head and *lanugo* – a fine, downy hair – covers the entire head and body of the baby. A waxy or cheese-like white substance called *vernix caseosa* appears to coat the baby skin, protecting the little body floating in the amniotic fluid.

It's time to start some easy exercise, walk a lot, and swim. Continue to drink at least 8 glasses of water a day; it's possible that your shoes become