Fetal Growth and Development

Month 1  The fertilized egg implants in the uterus; it doubles in size each day. The placenta and umbilical cord begin to form. The baby is enclosed in the amniotic sac. The spinal cord forms and nerve development begins. The heart forms and begins to beat 25 days after conception.

Month 2  The brain, lungs, liver, and stomach begin to develop. The first bone cells appear. Eyelids form and are sealed shut. The inner ear, ankles, toes, wrists, fingers, and sexual organs are developing. The tongue begins to form.

Month 3  The baby can open and close his or her mouth and move the head, arms, and legs. Fingers and toes with soft nails are present. Vocal cords and tooth buds are forming. There may be hair on the head. The kidneys begin draining urine into the bladder. The heart now has four chambers. Red blood cells are produced in the liver.

Month 4  Eyelashes and eyebrows appear. The outer ear is forming. The baby kicks, sleeps and wakes, and swallows. The liver and pancreas produce secretions. Sweat glands develop. By the end of this month, the baby is 8 to 10 inches long and weighs about 6 ounces.

Month 5  Muscles are growing. The gall bladder functions. Fat is forming underneath the skin. The baby is more active now. He or she can roll, turn head over heels, and suck. The baby may suck his or her thumb. By the end of this month the baby may weigh a pound.

Month 6  Rapid development occurs in the brain. The bones are becoming solid. The fatty sheath that transmits electrical impulses along the nerves is forming. Hair and nails are growing. Footprints and fingerprints form. By the end of this month the baby is 11 to 14 inches long.

Month 7  The eyes now open and close and are sensitive to light. Hearing is more acute. The hands can grasp. The baby may now weigh as much as 2 ½ pounds.

Month 8  Taste buds are developing. The baby can cry and hiccup. He or she responds to pain, light, and sound. The brain now directs body functions. By the end of this month the baby weighs about 4 pounds and may be up to 18 inches long.

Month 9  The baby moves into the head down position in preparation for birth. He or she is developing patterns of sleeping and waking. The lungs are mature. Most babies weigh between 6 and 9 pounds and are about 20 inches long.

M2-1/RL3.8

Copyright 2005, MedCost, LLC. Reviewed for medical accuracy by the MedCost Medical Director. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. Please consult your health care provider with any questions or concerns you may have.