

Third Trimester

Pregnancy Growth

By the eighth month, your baby probably weighs between two to four pounds and is somewhere between fifteen to seventeen inches long. Most important, is that your baby is now able to survive outside of you, if you were to deliver. He or she would be premature but could be helped to develop normally. At the end of nine months (or at term) the average sized baby weighs about seven or seven and a half pounds. Your baby's length is approximately twenty inches. The skin is coated with a creamy coating and hair and fingernails are developed. At term, your baby should do well living outside the uterus, whenever your delivery day arrives.

Labor and Delivery

Major indicators that the labor has begun are:

- Bleeding more than a teaspoon of blood
- Contractions are five minutes apart for at least one hour
- Your membranes rupture and you feel a gush of fluid

The vast majority of pregnancies are uncomplicated and end with the delivery of a normal, healthy baby. Even when complications do occur, early diagnosis and treatment will often prevent serious problems.

Warning Signs

You should notify your doctor immediately of the following early warning signs during the third trimester:

- Bleeding from the vagina, rectum, nipple, or from coughing
- Swelling or puffiness of the face or hands
- Sudden large weight gain
- Persistent severe swelling of the legs
- Severe or repeated headaches
- Dimness or blurred vision, or seeing flashes of light or spots
- Sharp or prolonged pain in your abdomen
- Severe or continued vomiting
- Chills and/or fever
- Sudden escape of fluid from the vagina

- Significant decrease in fetal movement