

The Mother's Journey

Understanding Your Body: Trimester by Trimester

First Trimester (Weeks 1–12)

Your body is working overtime to support a new life. Even before you "look" pregnant, you may feel significant changes:

- **Morning Sickness:** Nausea and vomiting, which can occur at any time of day.
- **Extreme Fatigue:** A deep sense of tiredness as your body produces more blood and hormones.
- **Breast Tenderness:** Hormonal shifts may make breasts feel swollen or sore.
- **Mood Fluctuations:** Feeling emotional or irritable is common due to rapid hormonal changes.

Second Trimester (Weeks 13–26)

Often called the "honeymoon phase," many women feel a surge of energy during these weeks:

- **The "Quickening":** Around week 20, you will likely feel the first fluttering movements of your baby.
- **Physical Growth:** Your "bump" becomes noticeable, and you may experience "growing pains" (round ligament pain) as the uterus stretches.
- **Skin Changes:** You might notice a "pregnancy glow" or darkening of certain skin areas (melasma).
- **Increased Appetite:** Nausea often fades, replaced by a stronger desire for food.

Third Trimester (Weeks 27–40+)

The home stretch. As the baby grows larger, physical comfort becomes the main focus:

- **Shortness of Breath:** The uterus sits higher, pressing against the diaphragm.
- **Frequent Urination:** Baby's head may press against your bladder.
- **Braxton Hicks:** "Practice" contractions that feel like a tightening of the abdomen.
- **Backaches & Swelling:** Extra weight can strain the back, and you may notice swelling in ankles or feet.

When to call your doctor:

Contact your healthcare provider immediately if you experience severe abdominal pain, heavy bleeding, sudden extreme swelling, or a significant decrease in baby's movement.