THE First Trimester

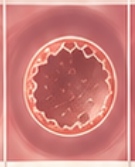
WEEKS 1–12

A time of big changes — for both you and your baby! ♡

THE MIDWIFE
EDUCATE ♥ EMPOWER ♥ SUPPORT

The first trimester is when your baby's major organs form, your pregnancy hormones rise, and your body begins amazing changes to support a new life.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON A FETAL LEVEL?

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8	WEEK 8	WEEK 10	WEEK 11	WEEK 12
											
Fertilization occurs (if not already) and the embryo begins to divide and travel to the uterus to implant.	Implantation usually occurs. Your body begins producing hCG, the pregnancy hormone.	The embryonic disc forms. Early heart cells begin to form.	The heart begins to beat (around day 21–28). Basic structures for the brain, spinal cord, and nervous system start to develop.	The heart is beating regularly. The brain, spinal cord, and early limb buds form. Foundations for eyes and ears begin.	Facial features begin to develop. Arms and legs lengthen. The heart, brain, and digestive system are forming.	Fingers and toes begin to form. Major organs continue to develop. The baby starts to move (you won't feel it yet!).	All major organs are present and continuing to mature. Facial features are more defined. The tail disappears.	The baby can now make small movements. Eyelids form, external ears develop, and vital organs continue to mature.	Fingers and toes have nails. The baby practices swallowing and breathing movements. Genitals start to differentiate (though often not yet visible on ultrasound).	The baby is growing quickly and looks more like a miniature newborn. Organs continue to refine and function.	The first trimester wraps up! Major organs and body systems are formed and will continue to grow and mature in the second trimester.

COMMON FIRST TRIMESTER DISCOMFORTS
(AND HOW TO FIND RELIEF)

DISCOMFORT	WHY IT HAPPENS	WHAT CAN HELP
Nausea & Vomiting (Morning Sickness)	Rising hCG and estrogen can affect the digestive system.	• Eat small, frequent meals (bland, high-protein foods) • Stay hydrated (sip fluids) • Ginger (tea, chews, or supplements) • Vitamin B6 (with provider approval) • Acupressure bands, rest
Fatigue	Hormones (especially progesterone), increased blood production, and your body's hard work.	• Prioritize rest and naps • Listen to your body • Gentle movement (like walking) • Balanced nutrition and hydration
Food Aversions & Cravings	Hormonal changes can affect taste and smell sensitivities.	• Eat what you can tolerate • Focus on nutrient-dense options • Keep healthy snacks on hand
Breast Tenderness	Rising estrogen and progesterone prepare your breasts for milk production.	• Wear a supportive, comfortable bra • Use warm or cool compresses • Gentle massage, if soothing
Frequent Urination	Increased blood flow to your kidneys and hormonal changes.	• Stay hydrated (but reduce fluids before bed) • Empty your bladder regularly • Kegel exercises may help
Bloating & Constipation	Progesterone slows digestion and relaxes muscles in the gut.	• High-fiber foods (fruits, veggies, whole grains) • Stay hydrated • Gentle movement (like walking) • Consider a prenatal-safe stool softener (ask provider)
Headaches	Hormonal shifts, increased blood volume, changes in blood vessels, and potentially less caffeine.	• Stay hydrated • Balanced meals (avoid low blood sugar) • Rest, stress management, gentle neck/shoulder massage • Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is generally considered safe (avoid NSAIDs like ibuprofen unless advised).
Mood Changes	Rapid hormonal changes can affect neurotransmitters.	• Rest, exercise, and nourish your body • Talk about your feelings • Practice stress-reducing activities (deep breathing, journaling, mindfulness) • Lean on your support system

WARNING SIGNS
(WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER)

While many discomforts are normal, contact your healthcare provider right away if you experience any of the following:

- **Vaginal bleeding**
  Any bleeding (even light spotting) should be checked.
- **Severe abdominal or pelvic pain**
  Especially if it's persistent, worsening, or one-sided.
- **Persistent, severe nausea and vomiting**
  If you can't keep fluids down and are at risk for dehydration.
- **Fever**
  A temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.
- **Pain or burning with urination**
  Could indicate a urinary tract infection (UTI).
- **Foul-smelling vaginal discharge**
  May be a sign of infection.
- **Severe headache, vision changes, or swelling**
  Could signal a more serious condition.
- **Dizziness, fainting, or rapid heartbeat**
  Especially if persistent.
- **Any sudden or concerning change**
  If something feels "not right," it's always okay to reach out.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR A HEALTHY FIRST TRIMESTER

- Take a prenatal vitamin with folic acid (400–800 mcg daily).
- Stay hydrated.
- Aim for a balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, protein, and whole grains.
- Gentle exercise (like walking) if approved by your provider.
- Prioritize rest and sleep.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco, recreational drugs, and limit caffeine (generally < 200 mg/day).
- Keep all prenatal appointments.