The Second Trimester

WEEKS 13–27

Growth, movement and so much more! ♡

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The second trimester is often called the "honeymoon phase" of pregnancy. Your baby is growing quickly, you may start to feel movement, and many early symptoms began to improve.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON A FETAL LEVEL?

Your baby is growing, developing, and becoming more active each week!

WEEK 13	WEEK 14	WEEK 15	WEEK 16	WEEK 17	WEEK 18	WEEK 19	WEEK 20	WEEK 21	WEEK 22	WEEK 23	WEEK 24	WEEK 25	WEEK 26	WEEK 27
														
Baby's organs are functioning, and the bones are hardening.	Facial features continue to develop. Baby can make small movements.	Lanugo (fine hair) begins to grow on the skin.	You may start to feel "quickening" (first flutters).	Fat begins to develop. Baby's skeletal system continues to strengthen.	Hearing develops. Baby can hear your voice and other sounds.	A protective coating (vernix) covers the skin.	Halfway there! Baby's movements are stronger and more noticeable.	Taste buds develop. Baby swallows amniotic fluid and your digestive system practices	Eyebrows and eyelashes develop. Baby's skin is still thin and wrinkled.	Lungs develop more, preparing outside the womb.	If born now, baby has a chance of survival with specialized care.	Brain development accelerates. The nervous system continues to mature.	Eyes open and close. Baby continues to gain weight.	Baby's lungs and brain continue to develop. Increased fat stores help with temperature regulation after birth.

COMMON SECOND TRIMESTER DISCOMFORTS
(AND HOW TO FIND RELIEF)

DISCOMFORT	WHY IT HAPPENS	WHAT CAN HELP
Round ligament pain	Your uterus is growing and stretching the ligaments that support it.	• Gentle stretching • Change positions slowly • Warm compress or maternity support belt
Constipation	Hormones slow digestion and the growing uterus places pressure on the bowels.	• Increase fluids and fiber • Regular exercise (like walking) • Stool softener (ask your provider) • Prune juice or high-fiber foods
Heartburn/ indigestion	Hormones relax the valve between the stomach and esophagus, allowing stomach acid to reflux.	• Eat smaller, frequent meals • Avoid spicy, greasy, or acidic foods • Don't lie down after eating • Elevate head of bed • Tums or other safe antacids (ask provider)
Back pain	Postural changes, weight gain, and relaxed ligaments affect the lower back.	• Good posture and supportive shoes • Prenatal yoga or gentle exercise • Use a pregnancy support belt • Heat or massage
Leg cramps	Increased weight, changes in circulation, and mineral imbalances can contribute.	• Stay hydrated • Increase calcium, magnesium, and potassium • Gentle stretching before bed • Massage or a warm shower
Swelling (edema)	Increased blood volume and pressure on veins can cause fluid retention, especially in the feet and ankles.	• Elevate your feet when resting • Avoid prolonged standing • Wear compression socks • Stay hydrated • Limit excessive salt intake
Varicose veins	Increased blood volume and pressure on pelvic veins.	• Wear compression stockings • Avoid standing for long periods • Elevate legs when possible • Regular exercise
Skin changes (melasma, linea nigra, acne)	Hormonal changes increase pigment production and oil production.	• Use sunscreen (SPF 30+) • Gentle skincare products • Changes usually fade after delivery
Sleep disturbances	Physical discomfort, frequent urination, and hormonal changes can make it harder to get comfortable.	• Use a pregnancy pillow • Establish a bedtime routine • Limit fluids close to bedtime • Side-lying position (preferably left side)
Increased appetite	Your body needs more calories and nutrients to support growth.	• Choose nutrient-dense foods • Focus on lean protein, fruits, vegetables • Healthy snacks throughout the day

WARNING SIGNS
(WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER)

Contact your healthcare provider right away if you experience any of the following:

- **Vaginal bleeding**
  Any bleeding should be evaluated.
- **Severe abdominal or pelvic pain**
  Especially if it's persistent, worsening, or one-sided.
- **Regular uterine contractions**
  More than 4–6 in an hour before 37 weeks (preterm labor).
- **Leaking fluid**
  A sudden gush or continuous leaking of fluid from the vagina (possible rupture of membranes).
- **Decreased fetal movement**
  If you notice a significant decrease in movement after 24 weeks.
- **Fever**
  A temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.
- **Pain or burning with urination**
  Could indicate a urinary tract infection (UTI).
- **Sudden or severe swelling**
  Especially in the face, hands, or with headache/ vision changes (possible preeclampsia).
- **Severe headache, blurred vision, or spots**
  Could be a sign of high blood pressure or preeclampsia.
- **Chest pain, shortness of breath, or rapid heartbeat**
  Should be evaluated promptly.
- **Any sudden or concerning change**
  If something feels "not right," it's always okay to reach out.

Trust your instincts — you know your body best.
It's always okay to contact your healthcare provider with questions or concerns.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR A HEALTHY SECOND TRIMESTER

- Eat a balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains.
- Stay hydrated (aim for 8–10 glasses of water daily).
- Get regular, gentle exercise (like walking) if approved by your provider.
- Prioritize rest and quality sleep.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and recreational drugs.
- Keep all prenatal appointments.