



CONVERSATIONS IN CARE

A Practical Guide for CHWs and Care Teams Rooted in Trust and Respect

Fetal Movement Monitoring

Why It Matters

Feeling your baby move during pregnancy is an important sign that your baby is healthy. Fetal movement monitoring, sometimes called ‘kick counts,’ helps families track their baby’s activity and notice changes that may indicate a problem.

This conversation guide aims to support providers in delivering information with compassion, creating a safe and respectful environment, and connecting families to the resources and support they need as they begin to navigate their journey.



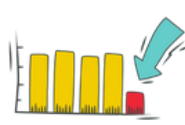
Time

Start a timer and record the time it takes for you to feel 10 movements.



Count

Pick a time when baby is active to start counting, preferably the same time every day.



Pattern

After each day's counting session, compare that time with your past sessions.



Contact

Go to the hospital if you notice a change in your baby's movement patterns.



Before the conversation

- Create a safe, respectful environment.
- Ask about what the family already knows or believes.
- Acknowledge that some words, beliefs, or traditions may be different, and that it is okay.
- At first, listen more than speak.





Questions

Answers

What is fetal movement monitoring?

Fetal movement monitoring is when a parent or caregiver counts and tracks the baby's movements, such as kicks, rolls, flutters, or jabs. It helps families understand what is normal for their baby and notice changes early.



Tip: Explain in simple language: "Paying attention to how your baby moves is a way to check their health from home." Reassure families that every baby moves differently, and the goal is to notice changes from their baby's usual patterns.

Why is it important to monitor fetal movement?

Regular movement is a sign that the baby is doing well. Sudden decreases or changes in movement can indicate that the baby may need medical attention. Monitoring can help:

- Detect problems early.
- Reduce the risk of complications, and
- Give families peace of mind about their baby's health.



Tip: Emphasize that monitoring is a simple, safe way families can participate in their baby's care. Remind families it is a tool for early awareness, not a replacement for regular prenatal care.

How and when should I monitor my baby's movements?

Timing: Start around 28 weeks of pregnancy. Many providers suggest monitoring once a day when the baby is usually active.

Method: Sit quietly and focus on your baby's movements. Count each movement until you reach a predetermined number (often 10 movements).

Duration: It may take up to two hours, but most babies reach 10 movements much sooner.



Tip: Encourage families to choose a time when the baby is usually active. Suggest keeping a simple notebook or chart to record movements. Normalize differences: some babies are naturally more or less active. Each pregnancy is different, so it is important not to compare but to familiarize yourself with your baby's movement.



Questions

Answers

Are there tools to help me track movements?

In Maine, families can use **Count the Kicks materials and mobile app** to make tracking easier. These resources help families:

- Record movements each day,
- See patterns and changes, and
- Know when to contact their healthcare provider.



Tip: Show families how to download the app or use paper tracking sheets. Encourage using the tool consistently for the best results.

What if I notice fewer movements than usual?

If a baby moves less than usual, families should contact their healthcare provider immediately. The provider may ask questions, check the baby's heart rate, or perform other tests to ensure the baby is safe.



Tip: Reassure families that calling the provider is the right step. Encourage families not to wait or guess as early action is safest.

Are there benefits beyond detecting problems?

Yes. Monitoring movements can:

- Help families bond with their baby before birth,
- Give confidence that the baby is doing well, and
- Encourage awareness of the baby's patterns and overall well-being.



Tip: Frame monitoring as both a health check and bonding experience. Highlight the family's active role in caring for their baby.