



# Your Baby & You!

a handy guide for the  
most exciting time in  
your life

[yourbabyandyou.org](http://yourbabyandyou.org)

Tips and facts for the  
expectant mother





You!

4- 6 weeks

**Congratulations!** You're a mother-to-be.

You probably look and feel exactly the same, but already your body has begun preparations for the incredible journey you'll take with your baby.

Even at this early stage you may be feeling tired! It's time to put you and baby first. Most mothers will feel their energy surging back after the twelfth week.

**Get plenty of sleep - take naps if you need to.**

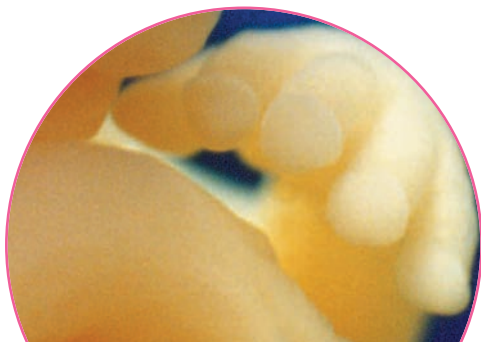
**Don't forget to take your folic acid every day!**



## Your Baby 4-6 weeks



At four weeks after conception, your baby will have increased in size by 10,000 times!



Your baby's heart has been beating since 21 days

Her heart has been beating since her twenty-first day; this sends oxygen and nutrients to her developing organs.

At six weeks your baby will be half an inch long. Her liver is producing blood cells and her brain begins to control movements of muscles and organs.

She has even begun to move spontaneously and her eyes are wide open.



You!

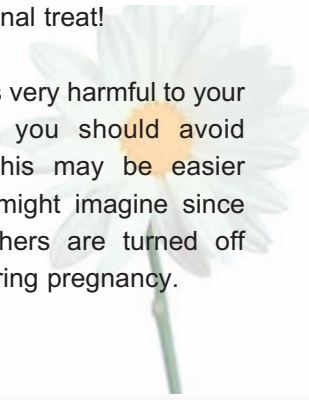
8 - 12 weeks

Pregnancy calls for quality food! Forget dieting and enjoy your changing body.

Try to eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, lean meat, fish, milk and hard cheeses.

Avoid soft cheeses. If you get pregnancy munchies, have nuts and fresh fruit to hand, but you can definitely give yourself an occasional treat!

Smoking is very harmful to your baby and you should avoid alcohol. This may be easier than you might imagine since many mothers are turned off alcohol during pregnancy.



If you're getting morning sickness try ginger tea or a ginger biscuit in the morning. Some mums find little green apples help!

## Your Baby 8 - 12 weeks



After only eight weeks your baby's organs are formed and by week nine she has fingerprints!

Even at this early stage she would curve her little fingers around an object placed in her hand.

Her muscles develop from now on by vigorous exercise in the womb as she floats happily in the amniotic fluid.



**Brain waves are produced  
by babies after 40 days!  
Ever wonder what your  
baby is thinking?**



You!

13 - 16 weeks

You may be feeling fuller in the abdomen. Your waistline will start to disappear.

You will probably have recovered your energy and any sickness will have stopped. Pregnancy is sometimes called Nature's makeover, so get ready for lots of compliments!

Take some time to get in touch with your feelings. Close your eyes and visualize your baby inside you. While strenuous exercise is not advised, walking and swimming are excellent ways of enjoying a fit pregnancy.

**Arrange a doctor's appointment during this time.**

**You may be offered a scan of your baby.**



## Your Baby 13 - 16 weeks



Your baby has become very active; yawning, stretching and even frowning. She also turns somersaults, which you will feel in another month or so.

By the sixteenth week your baby will be nearly six inches long.



Even at this early stage your baby will hear music. Choose with care - her musical taste may be formed early!



You!

16 - 20 weeks

At this stage you will have settled down into your pregnancy and will probably be enjoying the excitement of feeling your baby's first movements.

You may have increased a bra size - this is a good time to get measured and to get loose, comfortable clothes as your tummy gets bigger.

It's also time for you to begin exercises in relaxation and body awareness in preparation for the birth of your child. You will find your local health board centre useful.

To help avoid stretch marks, apply an oil or cream every day or as often as possible.

**Lots of high street names now do trendy maternity lines. Check these out:**

Top Shop

Mothercare

Dunnes Stores

Dorothy Perkins

Formes





## Your Baby 16 - 20 weeks



Your baby is now sucking her thumb. Because she is getting bigger and more energetic, you can feel her movements. The fluid in your womb is salty so your baby has buoyancy to move about and swim freely.

She might sit upright with a straightened back and legs crossed or she may be lounging with her arms folded behind her head. She is reacting to sounds, including your voice and will even jump or blink at a loud noise.

**At twenty weeks your baby will weigh one pound - as much as a small bag of sugar**





You!

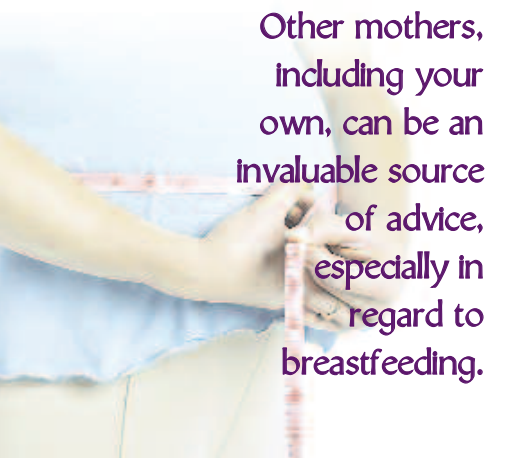
21 - 30 weeks

You may be guessing the sex of your baby, or what's more likely, others may be guessing it for you!

You can of course find out during your check up in the hospital, but many mothers-to-be prefer to be surprised.

Make good use of your pre-natal classes. Feel free to ask questions of your doctor or midwife about any aspect of your pregnancy.

Don't forget to apply for Maternity Benefit six weeks before your baby is born.



**Other mothers, including your own, can be an invaluable source of advice, especially in regard to breastfeeding.**

## Your Baby 21 - 30 weeks



At this stage your baby is using all her senses. Sometimes she opens her eyes and scans the darkness. She is busy laying down a layer of fat under her skin for insulation and nourishment.

Many babies born outside the womb at this early stage have survived. Neo-natal care has advanced to the stage where even babies born at twenty-one weeks, weighing only one pound have survived.



**Sometimes you can feel your baby's hiccups. She might have taken too big a gulp of amniotic fluid!**



You!

31 - 40 weeks

You're in the final stretch! Use these last weeks well; make sure you get plenty of rest. Plan your labour and delivery with your doctor or midwife.

Discuss pain relief and ensure that you are happy with the decisions made. You may be experiencing some swelling in your feet and legs as you near the end of your pregnancy. Put your feet up whenever you can.

Don't forget to pack your hospital bag early.

**Bring a hand-held electric fan for dealing with heat, and water to spray on your face.**

**Some mothers bring in lavender or rose oil to sniff during labour - whatever relaxes you, helps you.**



## Your Baby

### 31 - 40 weeks



Your baby takes an active role in getting ready to be born. Maybe she's just impatient to see her mammy's face!

In the last few days, she makes small stepping movements to push herself into the exit of your womb. This is called engagement.

**At this stage the womb has got crowded for your baby. She is ready to be born.**



A 3D scan of a baby's face @ 36 weeks



## Birth

Your body is preparing itself to deliver your baby, and your baby is readying herself for delivery.

When the time comes you will finally see your beautiful baby!

When your waters break, the baby tunnels through the birth canal. Your contractions help her along the way.

Finally she emerges. You will hear her birth cry.

**She is born.**

**Congratulations!**

## Useful Contacts & websites

**La Leche League**

[www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org)

**Irish Childbirth Trust**

Carmichael Centre

North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7

T: 01 8724501

[www.cuidiu-ict.ie](http://www.cuidiu-ict.ie)

**Your Baby and You**

16 Herberton Drive

Dublin 12.

[www.yourbabyandyou.org](http://www.yourbabyandyou.org)

**Department of Social Welfare**

Maternity Benefits Section

**Locall** 1890 690 690

[maternityben@welfare.ie](mailto:maternityben@welfare.ie)

**Websites**

[www.vhi.ie/maternity](http://www.vhi.ie/maternity)

[www.eumom.com](http://www.eumom.com)



# Your Contact Numbers

**Maternity Hospital**

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**Doctor**

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**Midwife**

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**Consultant Obstetrician**

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**Public Health Nurse**

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If you would like more information on aspects of your pregnancy and the development of your baby, then please visit our website

[www.yourbabyandyou.org](http://www.yourbabyandyou.org)

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