**What happens to your body during the second trimester?**

During the second trimester of pregnancy, symptoms that you may have experienced during the first trimester begin to improve. Many women report that nausea and fatigue begin to lessen and they consider the second trimester the easiest and most enjoyable part of their pregnancy.

The following changes and symptoms may occur:

* the uterus expands
* you begin to show a larger abdomen
* dizziness or light-headedness due to lower blood pressure
* feeling the baby move
* body aches
* increased appetite
* stretch marks on the stomach, breast, thighs, or buttocks
* skin changes, like darkening of the skin around your nipples, or patches of darker skin
* itching
* swelling of the ankles or hands

Call your doctor if you experience any of these symptoms:

* [nausea](https://www.healthline.com/symptom/nausea)
* [vomiting](https://www.healthline.com/symptom/vomiting)
* [jaundice](https://www.healthline.com/health/jaundice-yellow-skin) (yellowing of the whites of the eyes)
* extreme swelling
* [rapid weight gain](https://www.healthline.com/health/pregnancy/second-trimester-weight-gain)

**What happens to the fetus during the second trimester?**

The baby’s organs become fully developed during the second trimester. The baby can also start to hear and swallow. Small hairs become noticeable. Later on in the second trimester, the baby will begin to move around. It will develop sleeping and waking cycles that a pregnant woman will begin to notice.

According to the [American Pregnancy Association](http://americanpregnancy.org/while-pregnant/second-trimester/), by the end of the second trimester the baby will be around 14 inches in length and weigh a little over two pounds.

**What can be expected at the doctor?**

Women should see a doctor about every two to four weeks during the second trimester of pregnancy. Tests that the doctor may perform during a visit include:

* measuring your blood pressure
* checking your weight
* [ultrasound](https://www.healthline.com/health/pregnancy/ultrasound)
* diabetes screening with blood tests
* birth defect and other genetic screening tests
* [amniocentesis](https://www.healthline.com/health/amniocentesis)

During the second trimester, your doctor can use an ultrasound test to determine whether or not your baby is a boy or a girl. Deciding whether or not you want to know the sex of the baby before you give birth is your own choice.

**How can you stay healthy during the second trimester?**

It’s important to be aware of what to do and what to avoid as your pregnancy continues. This will help you take care of yourself and your developing baby.

**What to do**

* Continue to take [prenatal vitamins](https://www.healthline.com/health/pregnancy/best-prenatal-vitamins).
* Exercise regularly.
* Work out your pelvic floor by doing [Kegel exercises](https://www.healthline.com/health/kegel-exercises).
* Eat a diet high in fruits, vegetables, low-fat forms of protein, and fiber.
* Drink lots of water.
* Eat enough calories (about 300 calories more than normal).
* Keep your teeth and gums healthy. Poor dental hygiene is linked to premature labour.

**What to avoid**

* strenuous exercise or strength training that could cause an injury to your stomach
* alcohol
* caffeine (no more than one cup of coffee or tea per day)
* smoking
* illegal drugs
* raw fish or smoked seafood
* shark, swordfish, mackerel, or white snapper fish (they have high levels of mercury)
* raw sprouts
* cat litter, which can carry a parasite that causes [toxoplasmosis](https://www.healthline.com/health/toxoplasmosis)
* unpasteurized milk or other dairy products
* deli meats or hot dogs
* the following prescription drugs: [isotretinoin](https://www.healthline.com/health/acne/accutane-side-effects#pregnancy-warning4) (Accutane) for acne, acitretin (Soriatane) for psoriasis, thalidomide (Thalomid), and ACE inhibitors for high blood pressure

Ask your doctor if you have any concerns about the prescription drugs or supplements you are taking.

**What can you do during the second trimester to prepare for birth?**

Although there are still several weeks left in the pregnancy, you may want to plan for delivery earlier to help make the third trimester less stressful. Here are some things you can do now to prepare for birth:

* Take prenatal education classes that are offered locally.
* Consider classes on breastfeeding, infant CPR, first aid, and parenting.
* Educate yourself with online research.
* Watch birth videos on YouTube that are natural and not frightening.
* Tour the hospital or birth center where you will be giving birth.
* Make a nursery or space in your house or apartment for the newborn baby.

Consider whether or not you want to take medication for the pain during delivery.