

Seventh month of pregnancy

Now you have entered the 3rd trimester, the final phase of pregnancy that is characterized by the accelerated growth of the baby and maturation of all the organs. The third trimester has been aptly called the “home stretch.”

What happens during the seventh month?

At 26 weeks, which is at the middle of the seventh month, the baby weighs almost one kg. During this month, there is an increase in the activities of the baby. The baby will kick a lot, and movements are visible in many cases. The baby often opens and closes its eyes and reacts to light. At this stage, due to the rapid growth of various organs, the baby is more recognizable and proportional. During this phase, some women may feel their first contractions when the belly tightens for few seconds and then relaxes. Babies born during this period would still be considered extremely premature, as the organs are not yet ready to face the outside world. But due to better technology, chances of survival increase with every passing week.

Measures to take

In the seventh month, you will be gaining about one pound a week. It is the time when your doctor will test for gestational diabetes. For this purpose, the doctor may give you a sugary syrup to drink and check your blood glucose level. But you need not worry as in the US less than 5% women are diagnosed with gestational diabetes.

Since the countdown has begun, it is time to make preparations for childbirth.

Choosing where and how to have your baby

Giving birth to a child is generally considered a safe thing, except in some circumstances. In most cases, a medical specialist will be able to tell the woman if there is any concerns about delivering the baby naturally or not. Concerns could be due to the position of the baby or placenta inside the womb, the small size of pelvic bones, or even an earlier caesarian section.

Once you know that you can naturally give birth, it is time to choose the place. You may give birth at home or with a unit run by a midwife or in a hospital. If you have decided to give birth at home or with a unit operated by a midwife, make sure that the hospital is nearby in case of emergency due to some unexpected reasons.

In the case of an intended hospital birth, get additional information, like if the partner is allowed to be present or not, what other facilities are available, and what else you need to bring with you.

Once you have made the birth plan, the seventh month is also the best time to take some childbirth classes.

Taking childbirth classes

There are many types of classes available, and each differs in content and philosophy. Classes based on the *Lamaze technique* are the most common in the US. This method does not support or discourage the use of medicines during labor, but instead tells the mothers about all the available options, so that mothers can make informed decisions.

Classes will help to build your confidence, especially if this is your first pregnancy. They will also inform you about normal labor, the birth process, and postpartum care. Taking a class will provide you with practical tips to ease labor pain and provide education about breastfeeding and healthy lifestyle choices.

Another common method used in childbirth classes is the Bradley method. It prepares babies' fathers to be birth coaches, and it encourages delivery without the use of medications.

Other common techniques used in childbirth classes are the Alexander technique, hypnobirthing, and so on. So you may need to do a bit of consultation and research before choosing the course that best suits your needs and attitudes.

About the author:

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Dr. Preet is a family physician. He has been practicing medicine for the last 15 years and has a particular interest in maternal and child health. He understands the importance of a healthy pregnancy and its long-term effects on a child's health. He is also a passionate writer.

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