

Healthy Start Communiqué

A publication of the Healthy Start Coalition of Miami-Dade

Healthy Start Coalition
of Miami-Dade

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KICKS COUNT

Starting around 28 weeks of pregnancy, you can check your baby's health by doing daily "kick counts". Kicking is how your baby lets you know it's "OK". We call them "kicks" but punches, rolls and swooshes count, if it is a definite movement. Uncomfortable at times, but always reassuring, kicking means your baby is active and growing. Once a day, preferably just after you have eaten, take the time to be aware of your baby's movements. To do this you write down how long it takes your baby to move 10 times. You don't need to stop what you are doing, just be aware and count each movement as you detect it. If you haven't felt at least 4 or 5 movements by the end of an hour, you'll want to redo the count, this time lying down on your side and focusing on just counting movements. If, after redoing the kick count, you don't detect 10 movements within 2 hours its time to call your doctor.

Follow the directions below and keep a similar chart until your baby's birth day.

1. Pick a time once daily to record your baby's movements. Get in a comfortable position and put your hands on your belly.
2. Pay attention to the time on the clock when you begin, write down the time you start on the chart. Then, count the number of times your baby kicks, flutters, swishes or rolls. When your baby has moved 10 times, write down the end time on the chart.
3. If you do not count ten movements in four hours, call your doctor, midwife or nurse right away for further instructions. Most likely you'll feel 10 movements in much less time.

EXAMPLE: On Sunday, January 15th, you begin to count your baby's kicks at 6:00p.m. By 6:45p.m. your baby has kicked 10 times. You would fill in your Kick Count chart like this:

DAY	Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
DATE	1/15						
Start Time	6:00 pm						
End Time	6:45 pm						
Minutes to Reach 10 KICKS	45 min.						

You will hear that babies slow down as they get closer to full term. Whether that's true is debatable, but if your baby slows down, the change should not be sudden. If you notice any sudden changes in the normal pattern of your baby's movement or a sharp reduction in the amount and intensity of movements be sure to alert your prenatal care provider. As a mother, your job is to protect your baby.

Don't hesitate to pick up the phone and call. If you can't reach your prenatal care provider, head to the hospital to have your baby checked. Don't wait until morning. In a survey conducted by the National Stillbirth Society a majority of the mothers of stillborn infants reported not being told about kick counts. If your prenatal care provider hasn't explained what kick counts are or how important it is for you to monitor them daily during the last 3 months of your pregnancy, be sure to ask about kick counts at your next check up and request a copy of the Healthy Start Kicks Count passport! It's your body and your baby; don't ever hesitate to voice your concerns. Counting kicks is simple and it costs nothing.

REMEMBER

- Your baby may move all 10 times in a half hour or less or require a full two hours.
- It is important to know what is normal for your baby so you can tell your prenatal care provider if your baby's activity changes.

CALL YOUR PRENATAL CARE PROVIDER, CLINIC OR HOSPITAL IF:

- You do not feel 10 movements in more than 2 hours.
- You notice a sudden change in the normal pattern of your baby's movements.
- It is taking longer and longer each day to get to the 10th movement.
- You have not felt your baby move all day.

To find out more information about Healthy Start Coalition of Miami-Dade programs and services please visit our website at www.hscmd.org or contact us at (305) 541-0210.

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The Children's Trust

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PARTIALLY FUNDED BY THE CHILDREN'S TRUST. THE TRUST IS A DEDICATED SOURCE OF REVENUE ESTABLISHED BY VOTER REFERENDUM TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.



2006 LEGISLATURE VOTES ON \$11.1 MILLION INCREASE TO THE STATEWIDE HEALTHY START PROGRAM

Miami-Dade's Program Received \$746,583

Florida's Healthy Start Program received a \$6,559,882 increase from the 2006 legislature that will allow the program to provide services for 20,000 more women with high-risk pregnancies and infants statewide at-risk for infant mortality. About 70,000 women and infants currently are served by Healthy Start in the state of Florida. The increase of \$6.55 million in state revenues, which will be potentially matched by \$4.55 million in federal money, is the first general revenue increase for the program since Healthy Start began in 1992.

Members of the 33 Healthy Start Coalitions around the state have campaigned for an increase for the past three years. However, until now the program hasn't received an increase in state funding since its inception. As a result, Healthy Start program officials estimate that 16,000 fewer pregnant women and 18,400 fewer infants were served in 2003-2004 compared with 1995-1996, even though births in the state during that same period increased by more than 20 percent.

The help comes at a time of increasing infant mortality for some populations in Florida. In 2004, Florida had over 1,500 infant deaths. Infant mortality is considered a sentinel indicator of the health of a community. It is linked to poverty, education, housing, community and family violence, and access to basic health care. The infant mortality rate in Miami-Dade County is significantly lower than other areas of the state. In 2004, the infant mortality rate in Miami-Dade was 4.1 for whites and 8.5 for blacks compared to 5.5 among whites and 13.0 among blacks statewide. However, in recent years 17 counties in Florida experienced greater than 10 infant deaths per every 1,000 births. The infant death rate statewide was 7 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2004, but the death rate jumped to 11.5 for nonwhite infants. This is a trend that can be changed with an appropriate investment in the pre-natal and infant health screenings that programs like Healthy Start offer.

Programs that work, like Healthy Start, have a positive effect on birth outcomes. With the monies allocated by the 2006 legislature, the Healthy Start program is now funded to serve 47% of the need, up from the low point of 28% before the increase. It is hoped that with the increase an additional 20,000 families will receive services to help them thrive. Such a drastic increase in services has a profound effect on the health and well-being of pregnant women and the infants they give birth to in the state of Florida. Investment in healthy children and families needs to expand in order to stop the downward track many of Florida's county's are experiencing in infant mortality and low birth weight. Please encourage your local representatives to add improving pre-natal, infant and child health to their platforms. The families of Florida are counting on them. n



PREGNANT WOMEN AND HURRICANES:

HURRICANE READINESS

Hurricane winds and rain can cause major damage when they come ashore. It's important to plan an emergency strategy ahead of time and talk about it with your family. Preparing ahead of time helps you avoid the panicked rushes to buy basic supplies when a severe storm threatens your area. Prepare your home and familiarize yourself with your insurance coverage. Also build a basic survival kit and make evacuation plans long before a storm hits. It's especially important to make your evacuation plans early if you or a family member have a disability or special medical needs, or if you have young children or pets that must be cared for if you evacuate your home. When disaster approaches remain calm and follow your emergency strategy. Listen to your radio for weather updates and check your survival kit. If you have time, purchase your last-minute survival items. Anticipating a hurricane may be particularly stressful to a pregnant woman. If you live in a vulnerable area, it's important to prepare in advance. Many questions and concerns come to mind. To help alleviate some of these worries, it is helpful to prepare well in advance.



PREPARATIONS

- Have at least a two-week supply of medications on hand. Also, have extra prescriptions written out by your prenatal care provider. Remember, your local pharmacy may be closed after a hurricane. An extra supply of medications will help you temporarily. Extra prescriptions will enable you to go to a pharmacy that is operational.
- Have sufficient supplies relative to any complication in your pregnancy. For instance, if you are diabetic, have ample testing supplies and insulin. If you use any electrical testing devices such as a fetal monitor, get a battery-operated monitor and have plenty of spare batteries.
- Have fresh bottled water on hand.
- If your pregnancy is complicated in any way, discuss with your prenatal care provider whether you should go to a hospital shelter, a hurricane shelter or stay at home if a hurricane is approaching. If you need to go to a hospital shelter, only you will be permitted to stay, so have other plans for your family and pets.
- Take your prenatal and medical records with you if you are going to a shelter or out of town. Include a list of the medications you are taking and the prescribing information. This will be extremely helpful if you need to go to a new hospital or physician after a hurricane strikes.
- Call your care provider if you plan to go out of town until the hurricane passes. Provide your care provider with the name and telephone number of the people with whom you will stay. This allows your care provider to follow up on your status. In addition, family members and friends often call the care provider when you are unreachable. When the care provider's office knows where you are staying, it can alleviate the worries of those concerned.



AFTER THE HURRICANE

When a hurricane strikes your area, you may feel compelled to help with recovery efforts. Heat, fluid loss and fatigue may affect pregnant women more than those who are not expecting. So, follow some simple guidelines to keep you and your baby in good health:

- Drink water and fluids continuously. Be conscious that you may dehydrate quickly. This may predispose you to premature labor.
- Avoid long exposure to heat, such as working for sustained periods outside or standing in lengthy lines for groceries or water.
- Avoid lifting heavy objects.
- Do not overwork. Force yourself to take a few rest periods during the day.
- Get back to a healthy diet as soon as possible.
- Keep your scheduled office or clinic appointments.



Excerpted from <http://www.um-jmh.org/body.cfm?id=1619> which is provided as a public service by Jackson Health System and the University of Miami School of Medicine and http://www.mygreathome.com/safety/severe_weather/hurricane.htm n



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